

LONE WOLF

AND

子連水狼

CUB

VOLUME 2

THE GATELESS BARRIER

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水猿

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連水狼

story

KAZUO KOIKE

art

GOSEKI KOJIMA



®

DARK HORSE MANGA™

translation
DANA LEWIS
lettering & retouch
DIGITAL CHAMELEON
cover illustration
FRANK MILLER with **LYNN VARLEY**
publisher
MIKE RICHARDSON
editors
MIKE HANSEN and **DAN HARRIS**
assistant editor
TIM ERVIN
consulting editor
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Published by Dark Horse Manga, a division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc., in association with
Kabushiki Kaisha Live Works and Koike Shoin Publishing Company, LTD.

Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222
www.darkhorse.com

First edition: September 2000
ISBN-10: 1-56971-503-3 ISBN-13: 978-1-56971-503-1

9 10 8

Printed in Canada

Lone Wolf and Cub Vol. 2: The Gateless Barrier

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THE
GATELESS
BARRIER

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

子連れ狼



VOLUME

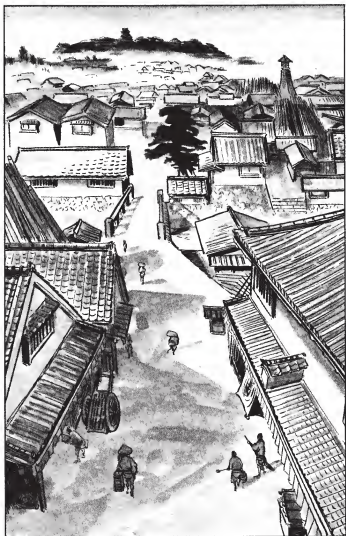
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LONE WOLF AND CUB



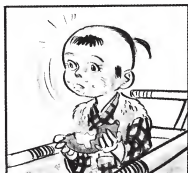
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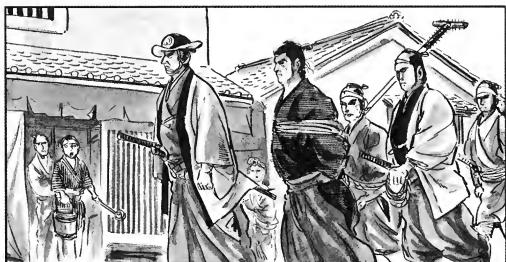


the tenth

Red Cat

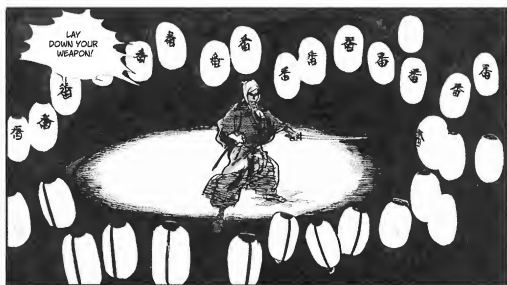


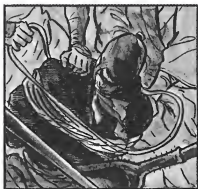












THE CRIME THIS MAN HAS COMMITTED IS CLEAR. TAKE HIS CONFESSION, AND SIGN IT WITH HIS FINGERPRINT.



WHAT IS YOUR HAN OF ORIGIN? YOUR FAMILY NAME?

SHIMOZUKI TAKE. I AM, DESPITE MY FALLEN STATE, STILL A SAMURAI. I REQUEST PERMISSION NOT TO DISHONOR MY PLACE OF BIRTH.



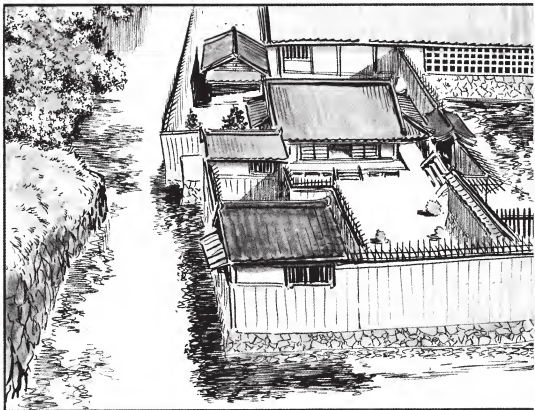
MPH! IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THIS STARVING DOG OF A ROBBER STILL HAS A SHRED OF SAMURAI HEART LEFT IN HIM. BUT SO BE IT.

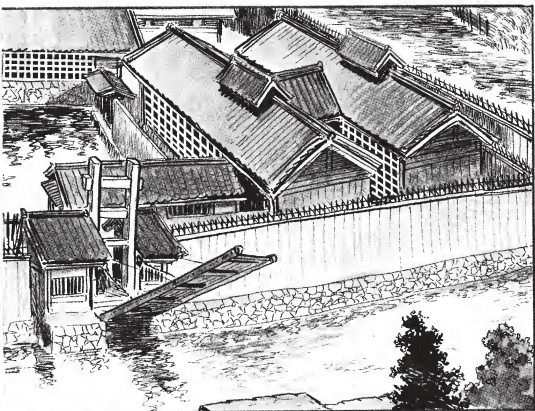


I SENTENCE YOU TO IMPRISONMENT! STAND!

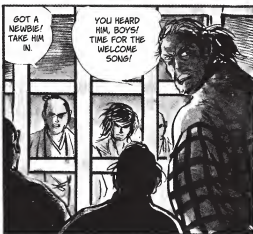
















IN FRONT OF THE MEN
LINED UP BEFORE YOU
A PATHETIC FELON LIKE YOU
COULDN'T EVEN ROB RIGHT
COULDN'T EVEN COMMIT ARSON RIGHT
HERE UNDER THE PINE TORCHES
TREMBLE WITH FEAR WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT



YOU GOT GUTS,
MY MAN... MOST OF
YOU POOR SODS SHAKE
SO MUCH WHEN THEY
HEAR THAT SONG
THEY CAN BARELY
STAND.

YOU'VE
BEEN IN JAIL
BEFORE!





THE GENTLEMAN
SITTIN' IN FRONT
OF YER IS OUR STAR
ACTOR MURASAME
TENSATSU, BOSS
OF THIS JAIL!

AND THEN
HIS CHARACTER
ACTOR, AND
SUPPORTING
ACTOR, NOT TO
MENTION...



THE NUMBER TWO
SUPPORTING ACTOR,
NUMBER THREE
SUPPORTING ACTOR,
THE STAGE MANAGER...



AND I'M GOKI,
THE ADMISSIONS MAN!
PAY YER RESPECTS
TO EACH IN TURN! SAY
WHO THE HELL YOU
ARE, AND WHAT
YOU'RE IN FOR!

....

AND IF YOU
GOT ANY CASH
ON YA, HAND IT
OVER AND BEG
FOR MERCY!



HEY, YA
BASTARD!
CAN'T YA
TALK?!

....

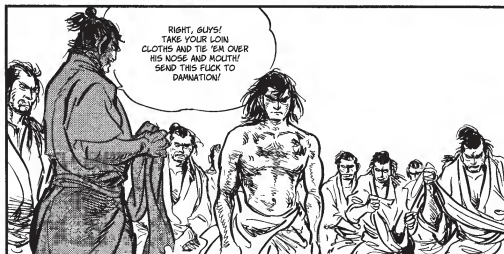
ACTING
TOUGH, ARE YA?!
WHERE DO YOU
THINK YOU ARE,
ASSHOLE?!

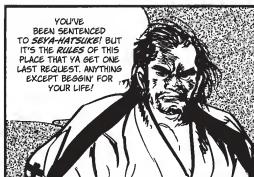






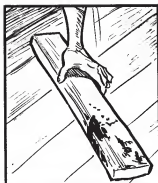












KILL HIM!

YAAAH



KILL HIM!
BUTCHER HIM!



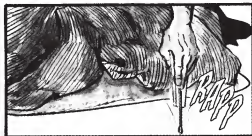












PRISONER! YOU HAVE
VIOLATED THE RULES OF
THIS INSTITUTION, AND
MURDERED THE PRISON
YARD LEADER AND
NUMEROUS OTHER
PRISONER OFFICERS!
THIS IS
UNFORGIVABLE!

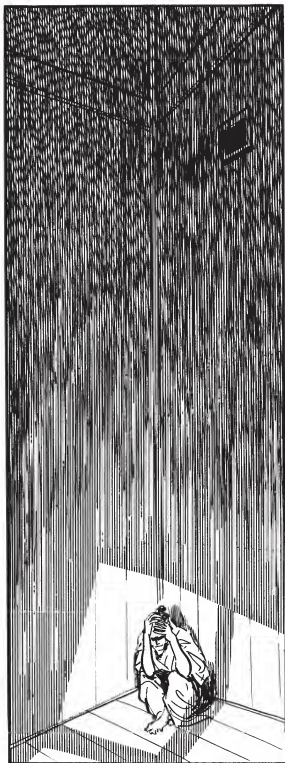


YOU WILL
BE PLACED ON
DEATH ROW,
AND SENTENCED
TO DEATH BY
BEHEADING!



TAKE
HIM
AWAY!







IT'S THE
CHOP FOR
BOTH OF YOU!
HIGH NOON
TOMORROW!



THEY'LL BE
TESTING A
NEW SWORD
FOR OUR LORD.
HEH HEH HEH!



ONE OF YOU GETS TO TEST
THE CUTTING EDGE, RIGHT
THROUGH YOUR TORSO. ALIVE,
OF COURSE. THE OTHER GETS
TO SEE HOW IT IS FOR
STABBING. HEE HEE HEE HEE...

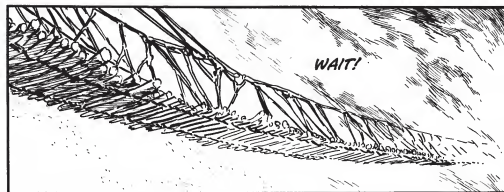
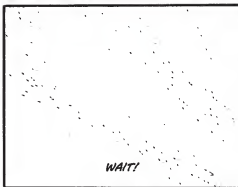


EKK!

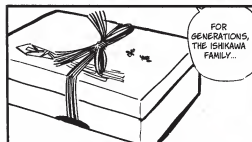
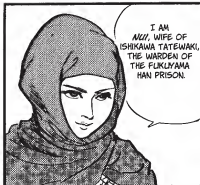


AH!
WAHH..!

S- SAVE ME!
SOMEBODY!





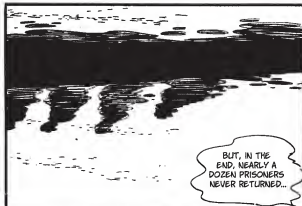








MY DEPARTED FATHER
RELEASED THE PRISONERS
ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY
AS PRISON WARDEN.



BUT, IN THE
END, NEARLY A
DOZEN PRISONERS
NEVER RETURNED...

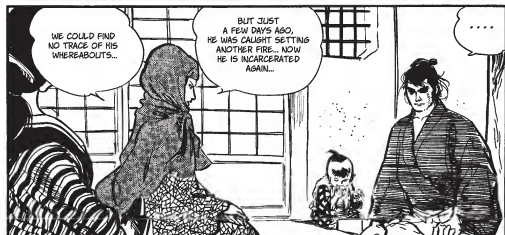


AFTER
WAITING
THROUGH THE
NIGHT, MY
FATHER...



...TOOK FULL
RESPONSIBILITY,
AND KILLED HIMSELF
IN PENANCE.

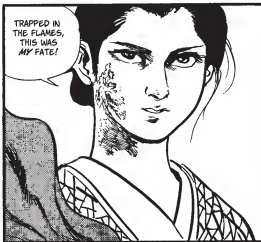
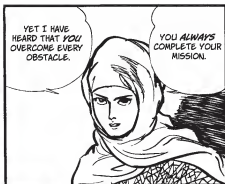
AMONGST THE
PRISONERS THAT
DID NOT COME BACK
WAS THAT SAME
AKANeko SHINSUKE...



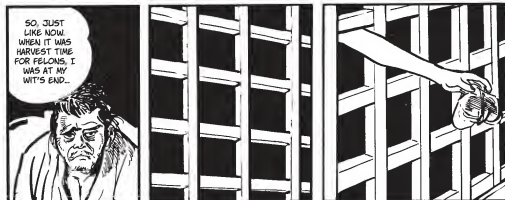
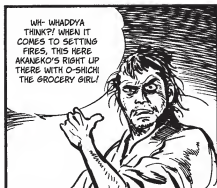
WE COULD FIND
NO TRACE OF HIS
WHEREABOUTS...

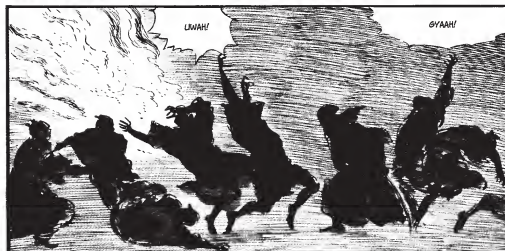
BUT JUST
A FEW DAYS AGO,
HE WAS CAUGHT SETTING
ANOTHER FIRE... NOW
HE IS INCARCERATED
AGAIN...

....





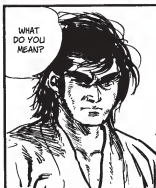






THE BASTARD.
HIS FACE WAS
COVERED UP, BUT
HE WAS DAMN GOOD.
MUST HAVE KILLED
TEN OF THE GUYS
AT LEAST.

I RAN LIKE CRAZY,
SO I DON'T KNOW
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...
BUT THAT WHOLE AFFAIR?
IT WAS A *SETUP* FROM
THE *GET-GO*, I SWEAR.



WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



HEY, IF THE
PRISONERS
DON'T COME
BACK, IT DON'T
MATTER WHAT HIS
INTENTIONS
WERE. IT'S STILL
THE WARDEN'S
FAULT.

IF SOMEONE USED
ME TO SET A FIRE,
OFFED A BUNCH OF THE
GUYS AND HID THEIR
BODIES SOMEWHERE SO
IT LOOKED LIKE THEY
RAN, THEN YOU KNOW
WHAT HAPPENS
NEXT.



SO ALL
YOU NEED IS
SOME FIRE...

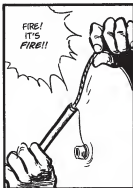
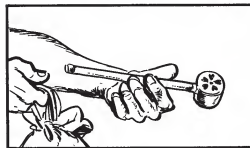
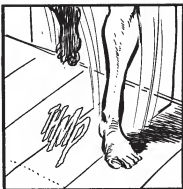
YEAH.
DAMN STRAIGHT.
BUT...

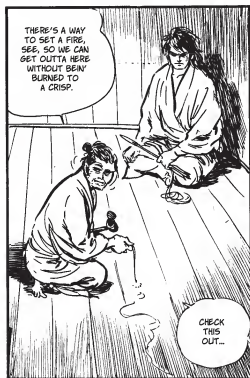


THERE
AIN'T
ANY...











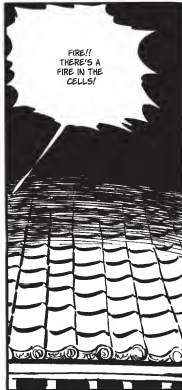
WHAT HAPPENED
ONCE HAPPENS TWICE...
THE CRIMINAL WHO DID IT
FIRST WILL SUSPECT
SOMEONE ELSE OF
TRYING THE SAME THING
AGAINST HIM...

HE'LL WANT TO
KNOW HOW AKANEKO
GOT HIS FIRE. HE'LL
HAVE TO KNOW. SO THE
FIRST MAN HERE...

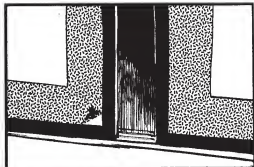


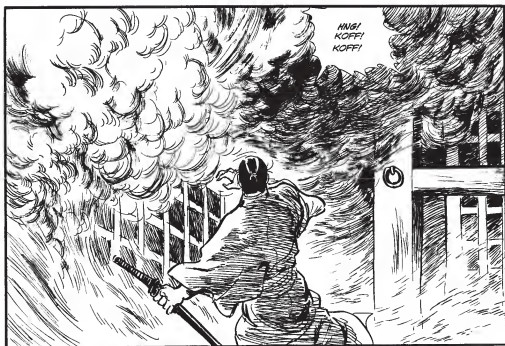
THAT IS THE
PERPETRATOR.

AND AS
FOR WHO HE
WILL BE...

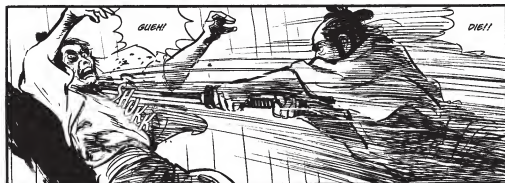


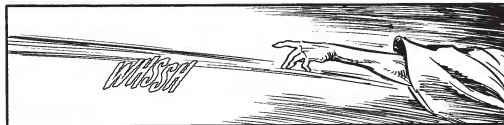
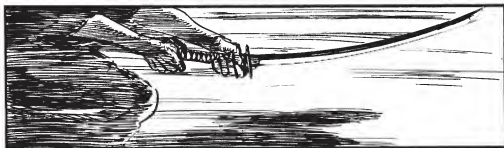
FIRE!!
THERE'S A
FIRE IN THE
CELLS!



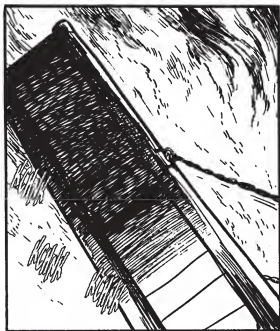










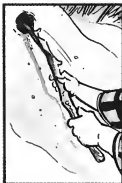


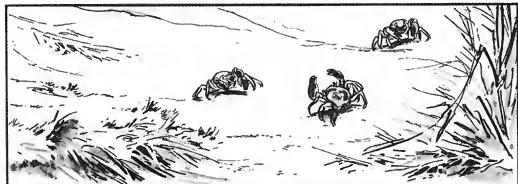
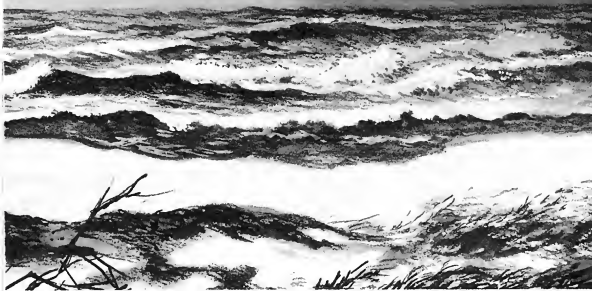


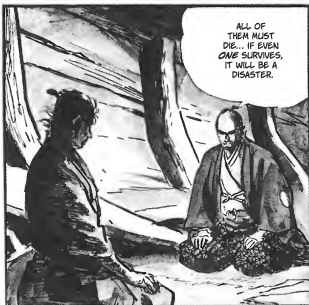
the eleventh



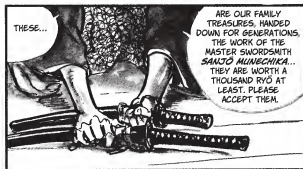
The Coming of the Cold

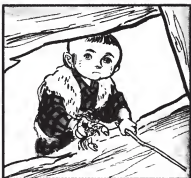






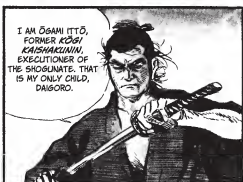






STAINING YOUR
CLAWS WITH BLOOD
WHY DO YOU
CLUTCH SO HARD,
RED HAIR CRAB?

A FITTING PARTING POEM
TO TAKE WITH ME TO
MEIDO, THE LAND
OF DEATH.



I AM ÔGAMI ITTÔ,
FORMER KÔGI
KAISHAKUNIN,
EXECUTIONER OF
THE SHOGUNATE. THAT
IS MY ONLY CHILD,
DAISORO.



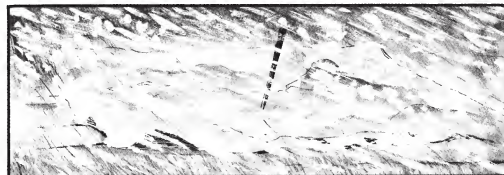
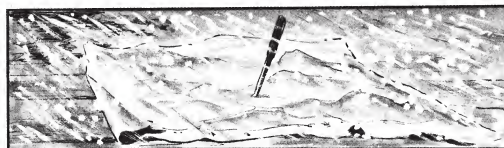
HO! KÔGI
KAISHAKUNIN!
NOW I SEE
YOU HONOR ME
BY SHARING
YOUR NAME.
AND NOW...

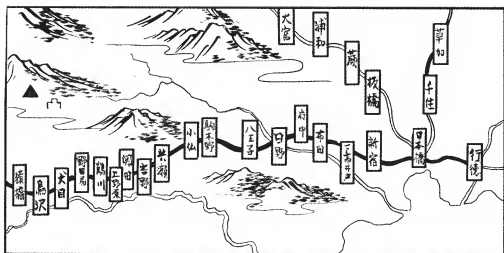


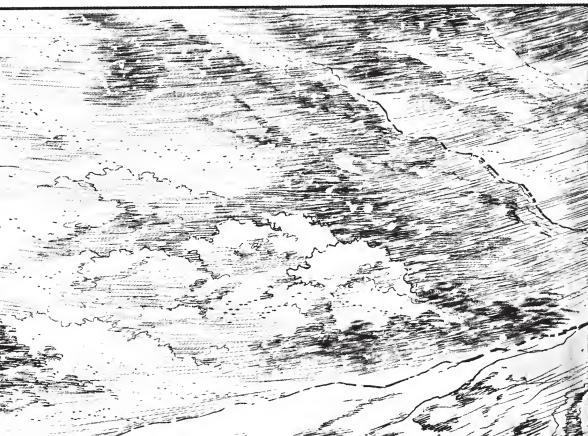
NGN!!

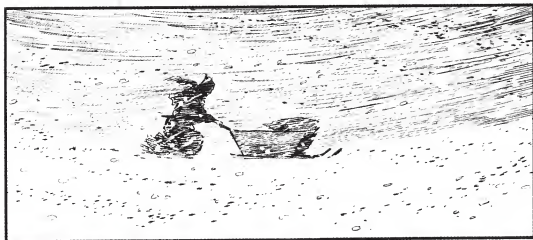
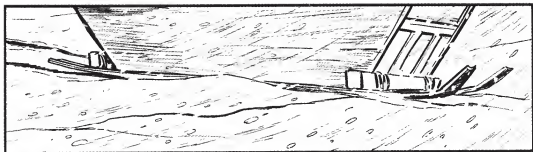


GOMEN!



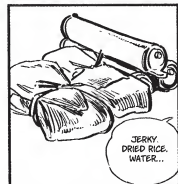




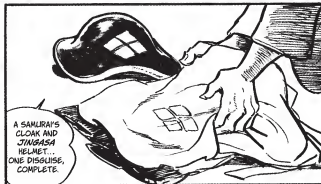




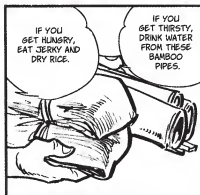


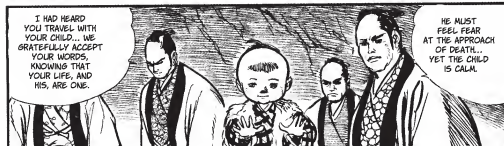


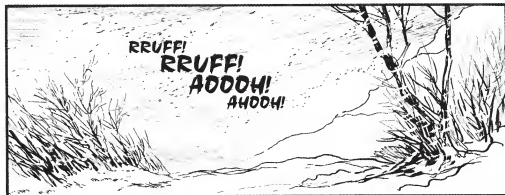
JERKY.
DRIED RICE.
WATER...

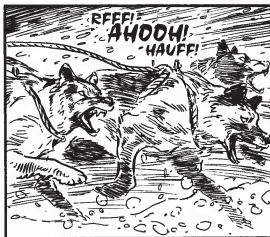


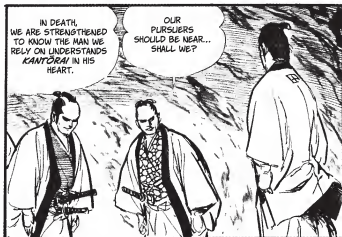
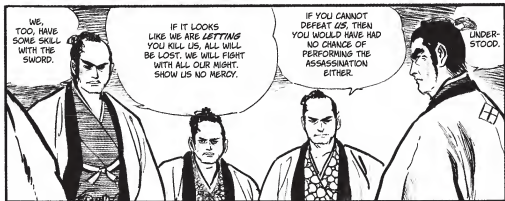
A SAMURAI'S
CLOAK AND
JINGASA
HELMET...
ONE DISGUISE,
COMPLETE.



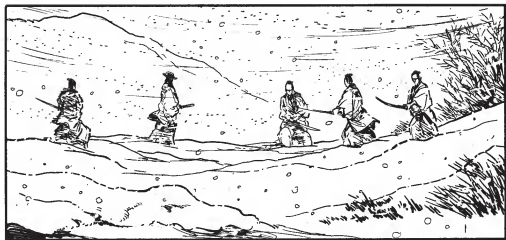


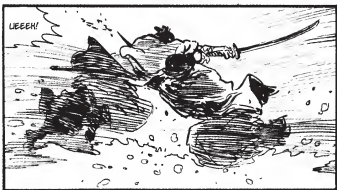


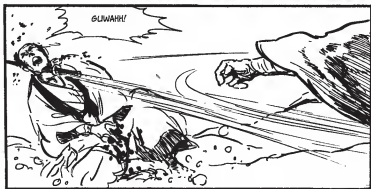
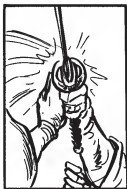
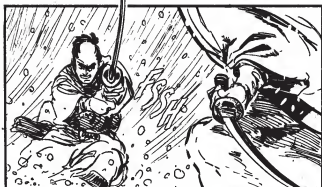


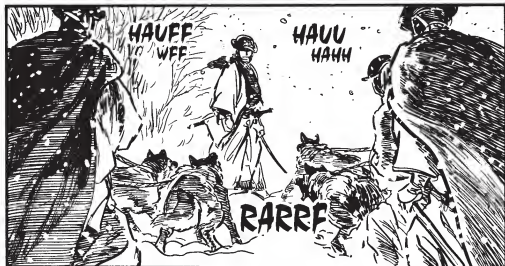
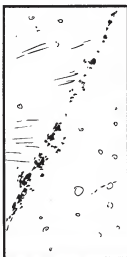


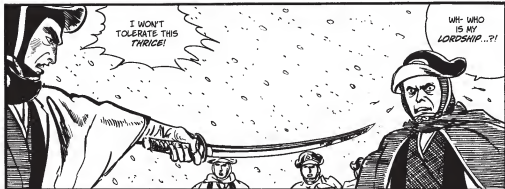
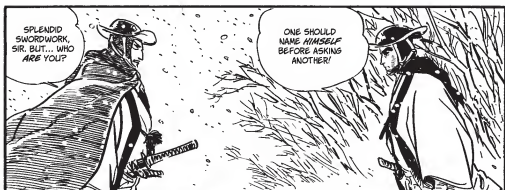


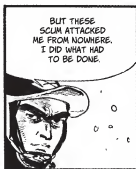


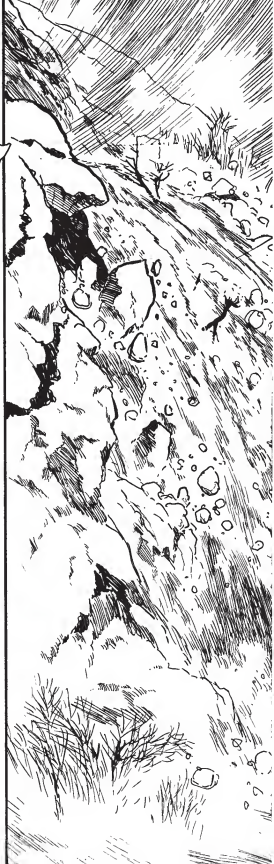
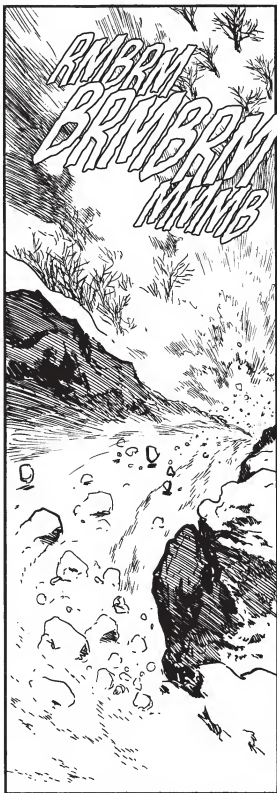


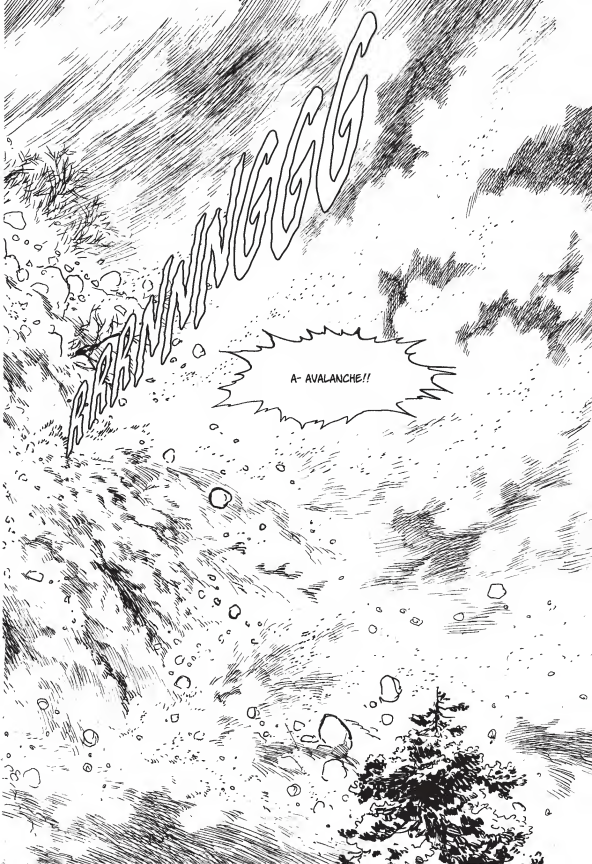












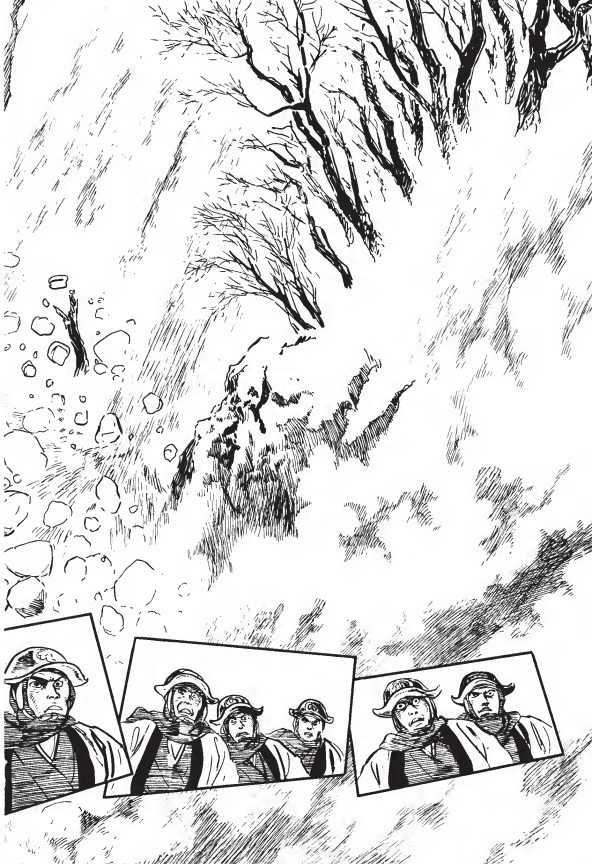
BRANNINGGG

A- AVALANCHE!!



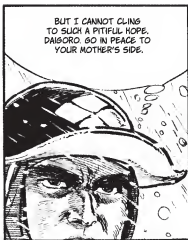








IF IT SNOWS
WITHOUT A MOMENT'S
PAUSE FOR THE NEXT FIVE
DAYS, THEN WE STILL HAVE
HOPE. ONE CHANCE IN
TEN THOUSAND...



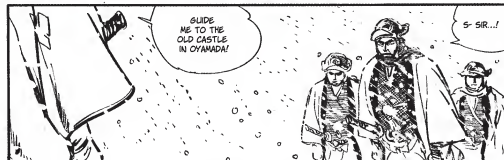
BUT I CANNOT CLING
TO SUCH A PITIFUL HOPE.
DAISORO. GO IN PEACE TO
YOUR MOTHER'S SIDE.



I CAN NO
LONGER PRAY TO
THE GODS OR BUDDHA.
BUT TO THE HORSE-
HEADED, OX-HEADED
DEMONS OF
MEIFUMADO,
I PRAY...



...FOR YOUR
SALVATION...

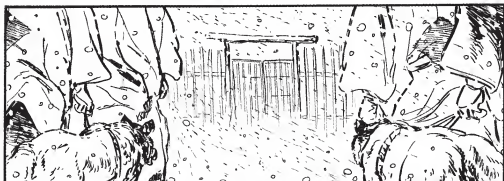
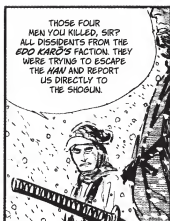


GUIDE
ME TO THE
OLD CASTLE
IN OYAMADA!

S- SIR...!

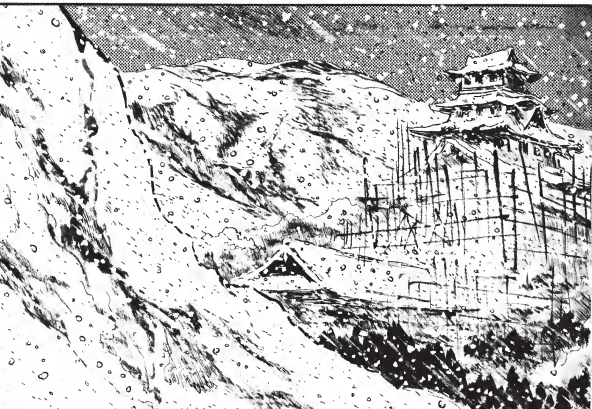


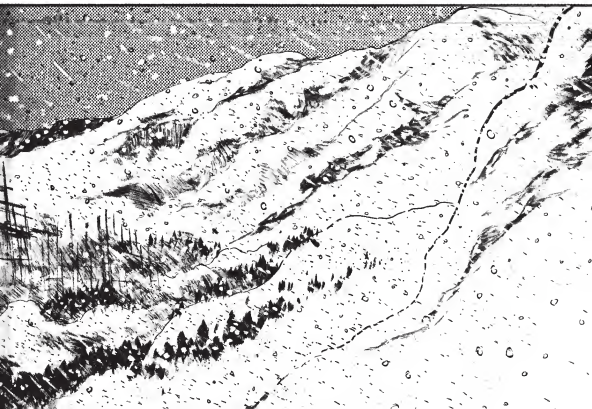
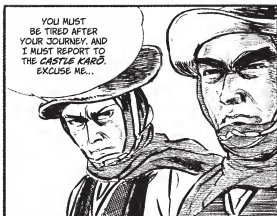
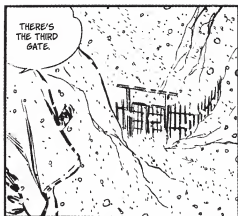


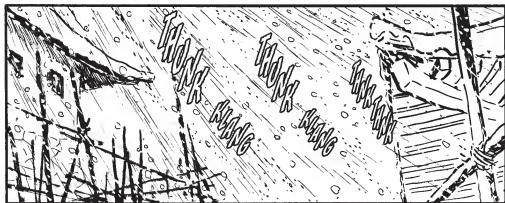
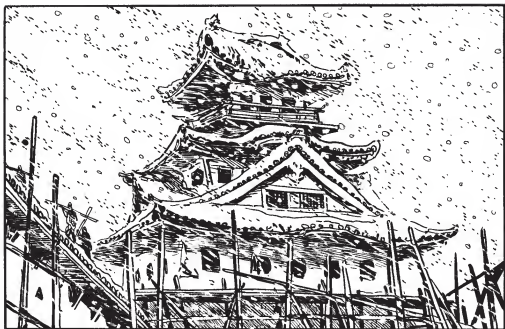


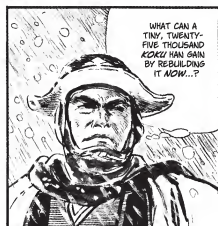


IF WE'RE REPORTED
TO THE SHOGUN,
THE CLAN IS BOUND
TO BE DISBANDED.
AND IF THAT HAPPENS,
WE HANSAI WILL ALL BE
OUT ON THE STREET.
OUR LORD SHOULD HAVE
THOUGH OF THAT.
HEH HEH HEH...









ALMOST ALL OF
KŌSHŪ IS TENRYŪ LAND
BELONGING TO THE SHOGUN
HIMSELF, CONTROLLED BY
THE SHOGUN'S KŌSHŪ
MAGISTRATE... OUR LORD'S
CLAN, GRANTED A MERE
HANDFUL OF THAT LAND, ARE
JINYA BATTLEFIELD DAIMYŌ,
FORBIDDEN TO HAVE
A CASTLE OF
THEIR OWN...

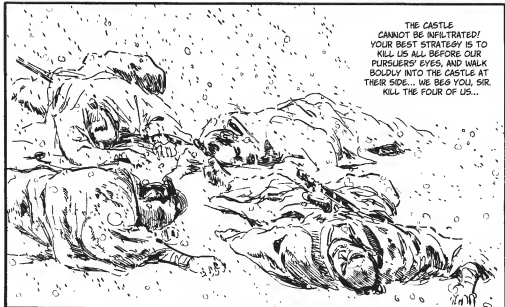
YET EVEN HERE
IN THE LAND OF TAKEDA
SHINGEN THERE WAS
ALREADY A CASTLE, LEFT
BY OUR ANCESTORS. OUR
RETIRED DAIMYŌ, LORD ICHIO,
DECIDED TO REBUILD
IT FOR HIS PERSONAL
RESIDENCE.

I UNDERSTAND
LORD ICHIO'S DESIRE
TO LIVE IN A CASTLE...
BUT AS YOU WELL KNOW,
YOU CANNOT EVEN REPAIR
A WALL OF AN OUTPOST FORT
WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE
SHOGUNATE. IF A HAN SHOULD
TRY REBUILDING AN ENTIRE
CASTLE, YOU CAN IMAGINE
THE CONSEQUENCES!

WE HAVE TRIED DESPERATELY
TO DISSUADE LORD ICHIO, BUT HE
IS STUBBORN AND WILL NOT LISTEN.
INDEED, HE HAS JOKED THAT ONCE
THE CASTLE IS FINISHED, WE CAN
DO BATTLE AGAINST THE SHOGUN!
THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH FINGERS
ON BOTH HANDS TO COUNT HOW
MANY LOYAL RETAINERS HAVE
BEEN ORDERED TO COMMIT
SEPPUKU, THEIR FAMILY
NAMES EXTINGUISHED,
FOR OPPOSING
HIS WILL.

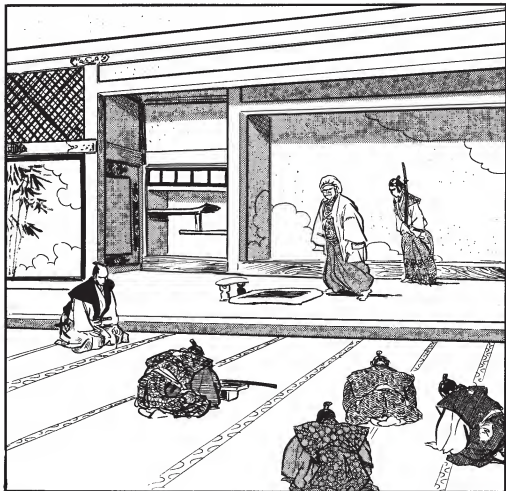
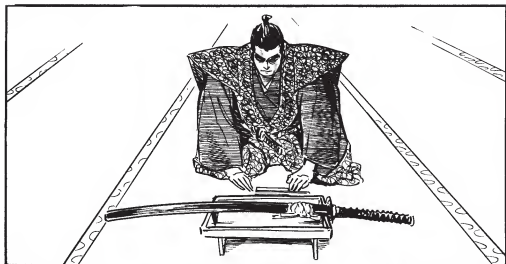
THE HAN ASSETS DRAIN
AWAY LIKE WATER POURING
FROM A SPRING. WE WERE
POOR TO BEGIN WITH. NOW
WE TEETER ON THE BRINK
OF DISASTER. OUR DAIMYO
IS A FILIAL YOUNG MAN,
WHO CANNOT BRING
HIMSELF TO OPPOSE
HIS FATHER.

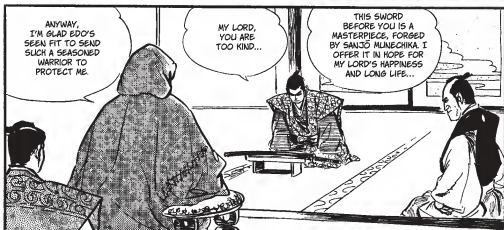
NOW THE KUNI-KARO, FUKUYAMA SAHEI,
EXPLOITS THE SITUATION TO LINE HIS
OWN POCKETS. HE'S SUSPECTED OF
DIVERTING A FORTUNE FROM THE HAN.
THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE CLAN AND THE
HAN IS TO TAKE LORD ICHIO'S LIFE.
I AND FOUR COMRADES IN THE HAN
ARE RESIGNED TO BEING BRANDED
FOREVER AS DISLOYAL TRAITORS.
AFTER ALL, WE SEEK TO KILL THE
HONORED FATHER OF OUR OWN
LORD. I SHALL COMMIT SEPPUKU
IN PENANCE. I BEG YOU.
END LORD ICHIO'S LIFE...

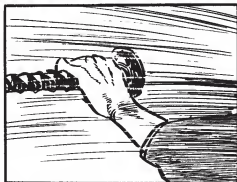
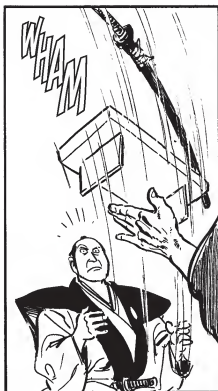


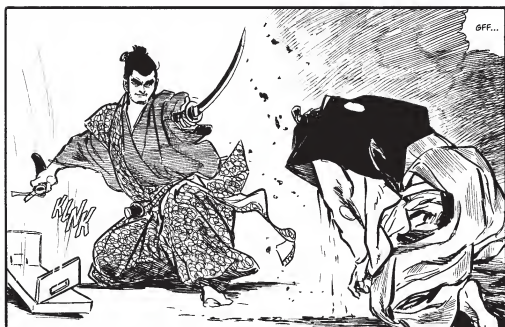
THE CASTLE
CANNOT BE INFILTRATED!
YOUR BEST STRATEGY IS TO
KILL US ALL BEFORE OUR
PURSUERS' EYES, AND WALK
BOLDLY INTO THE CASTLE AT
THEIR SIDE... WE BEG YOU, SIR.
KILL THE FOUR OF US...

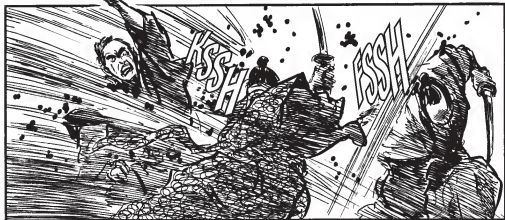


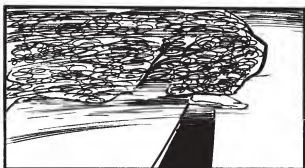


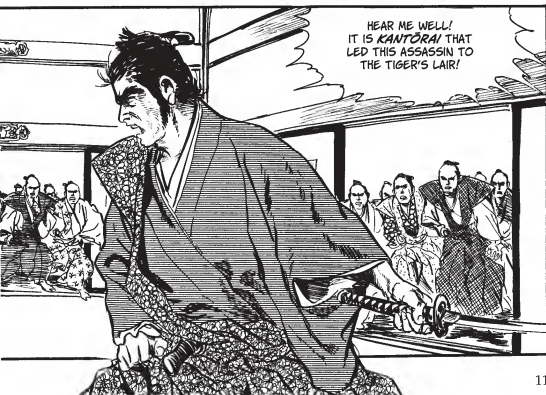
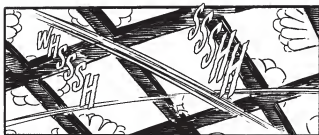


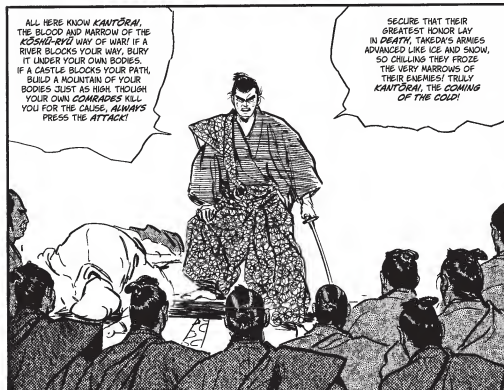






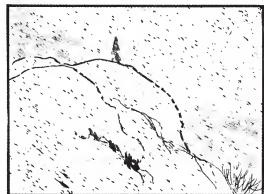
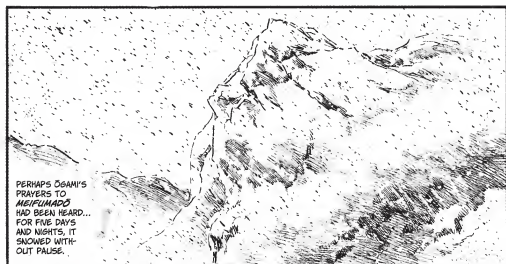


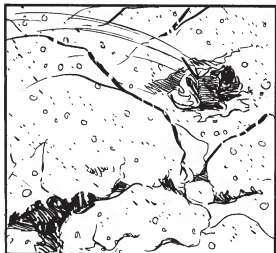
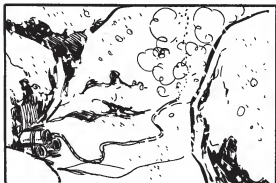
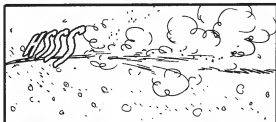












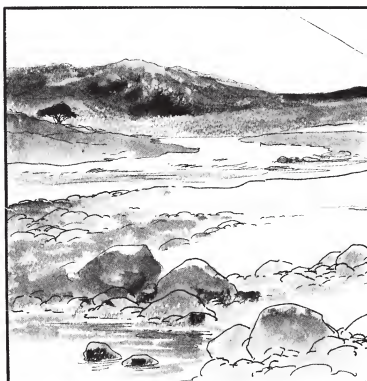
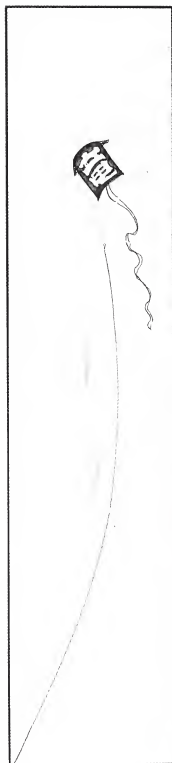


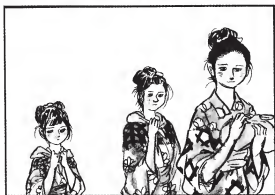


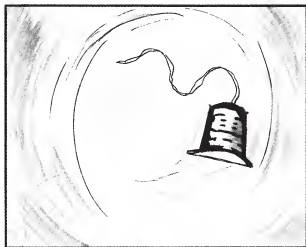
the twelfth

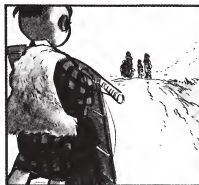
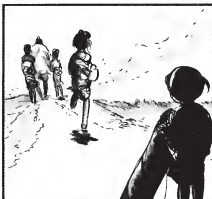
Tragic D- Sue

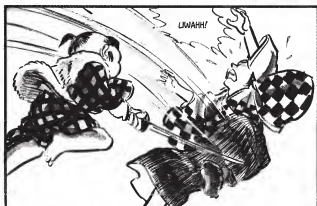
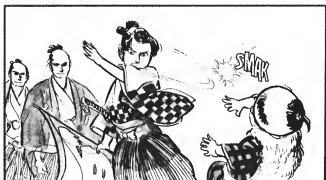


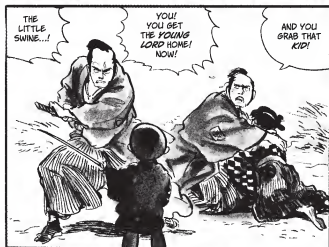
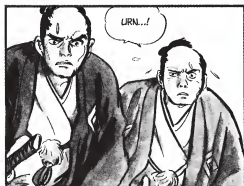


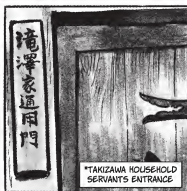
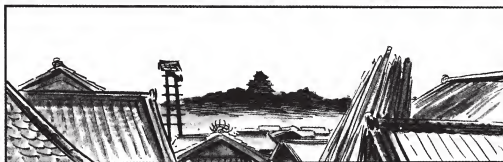


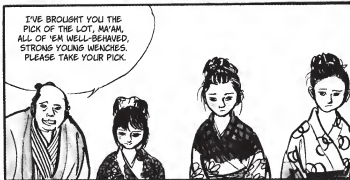
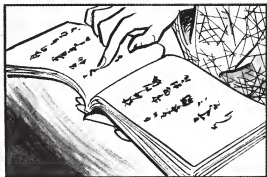


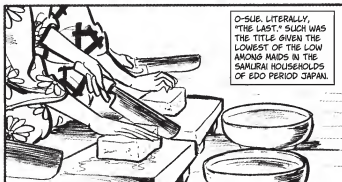


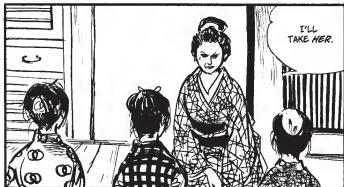
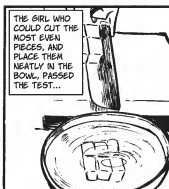




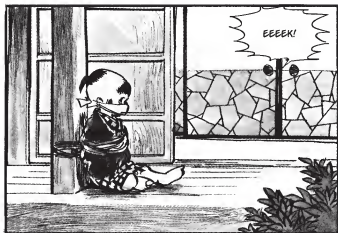


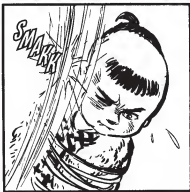
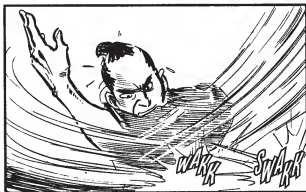


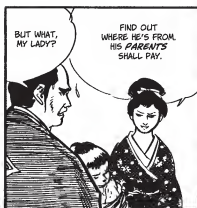






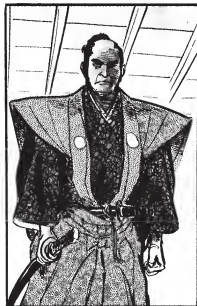


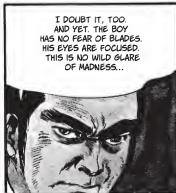




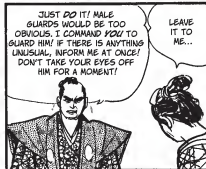
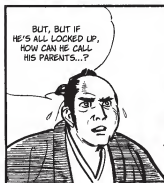
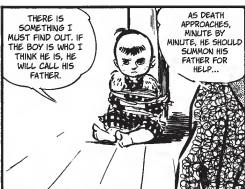


STOP!



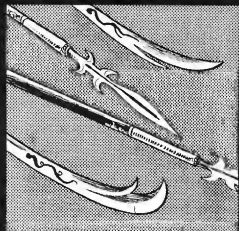






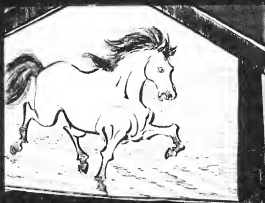


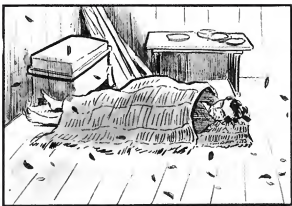
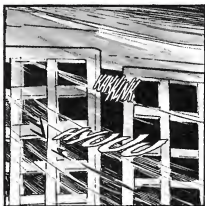




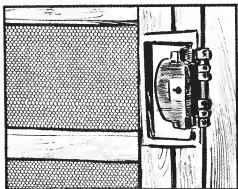
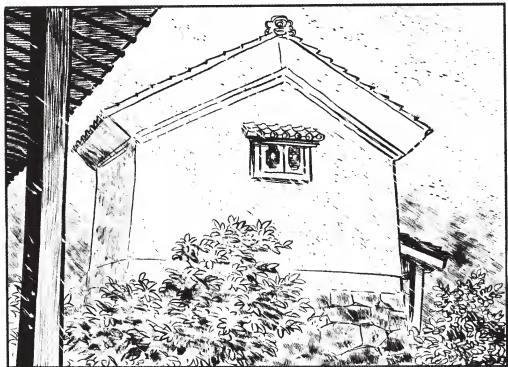


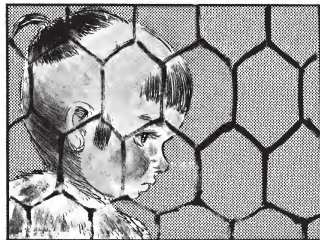
HAH
HAH
HAH...

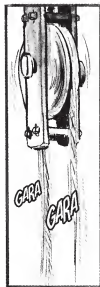


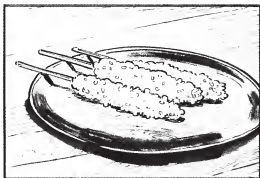
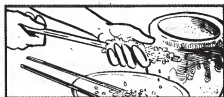


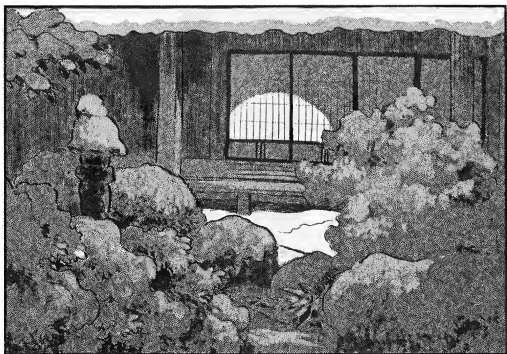


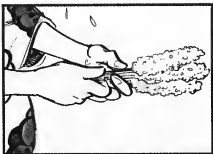


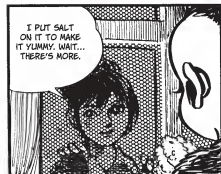
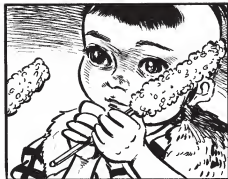
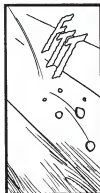
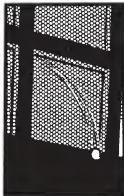


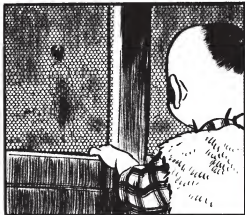
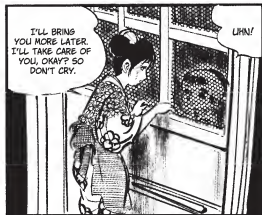






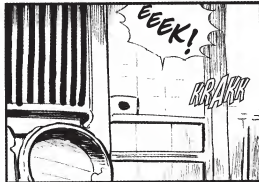
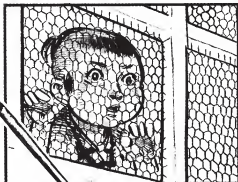


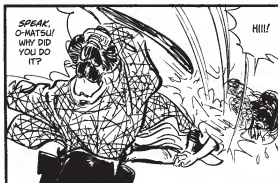
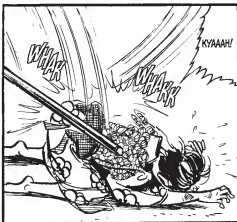




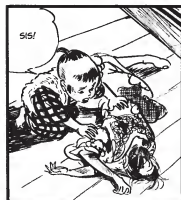
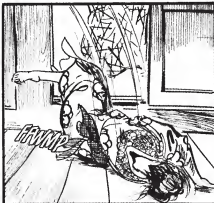






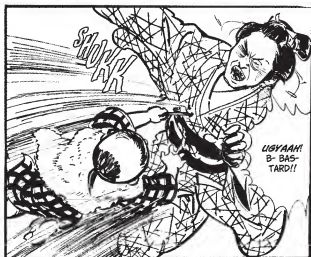


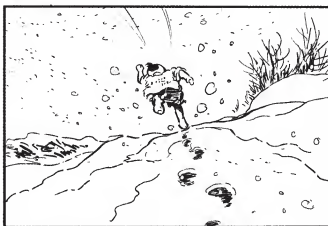
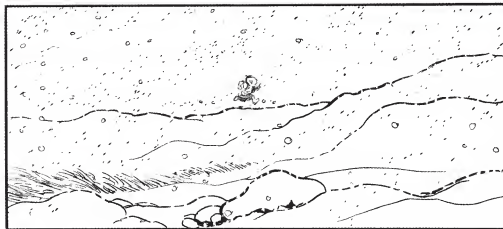


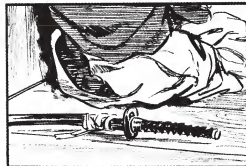








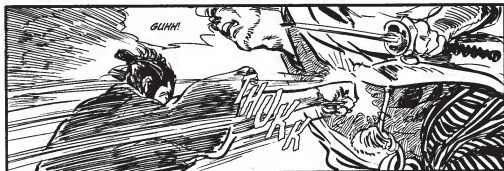


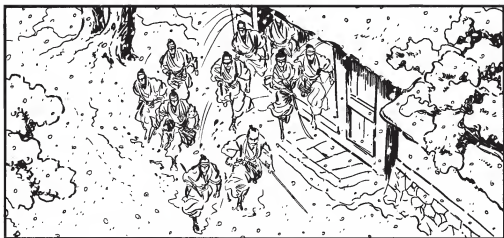


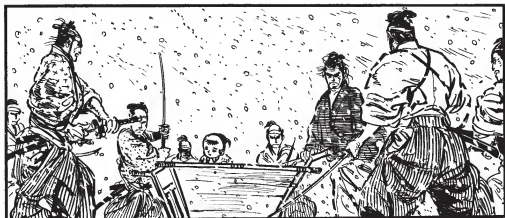


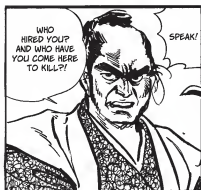




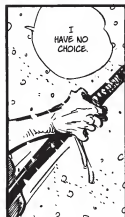
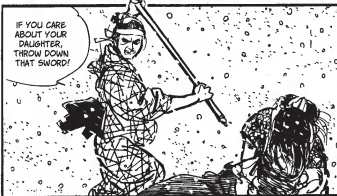
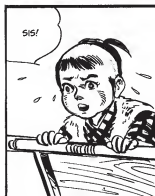


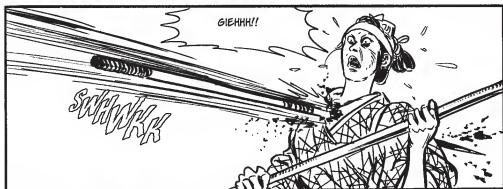
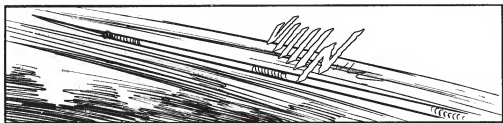




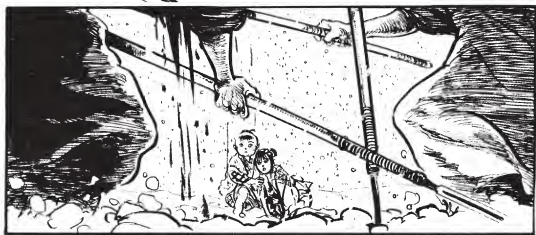


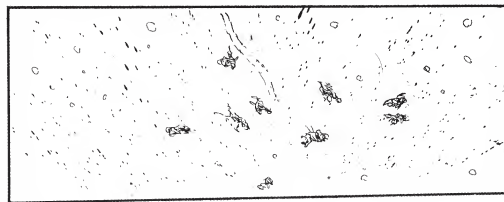
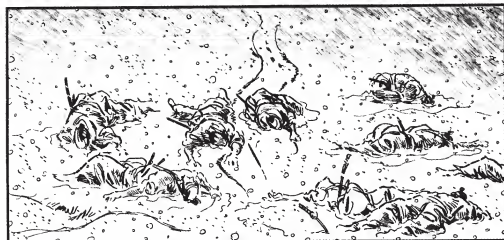
SPEAK!











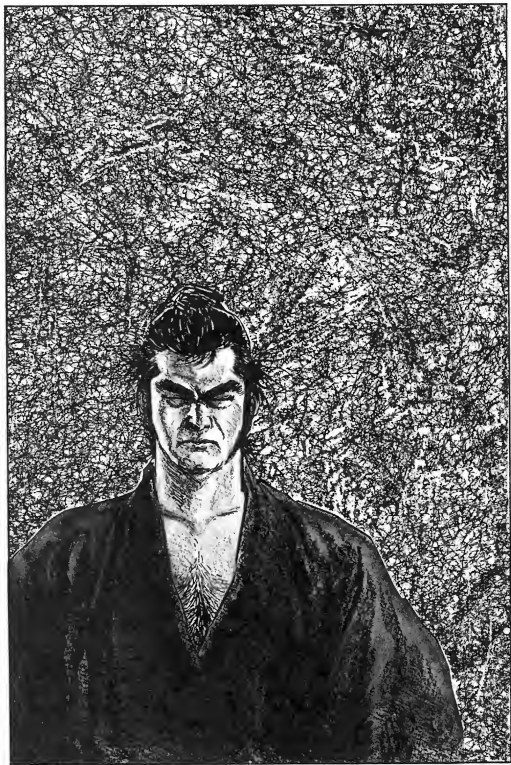
the thirteenth



The Gateless Barrier

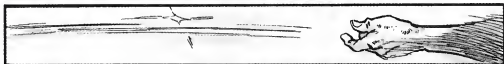
ON THE GREAT WAY
THERE IS NO GATE
BUT A THOUSAND PATHS
TO CHOOSE FROM.
FIND THE GATE
AND YOU MAY WALK ALONE
BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH



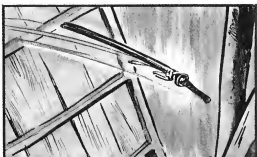










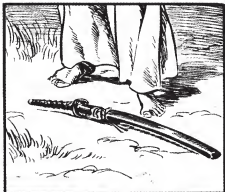




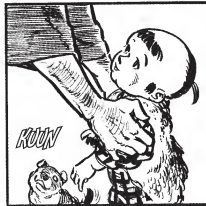
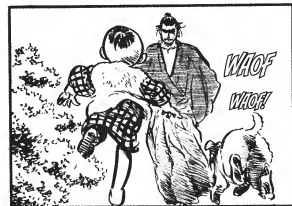
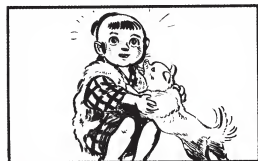
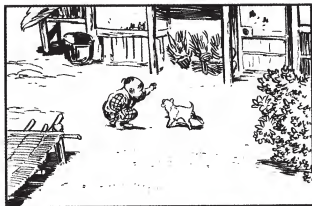




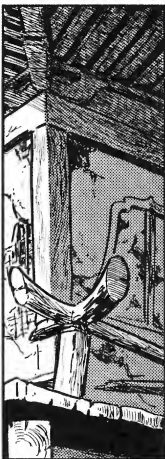


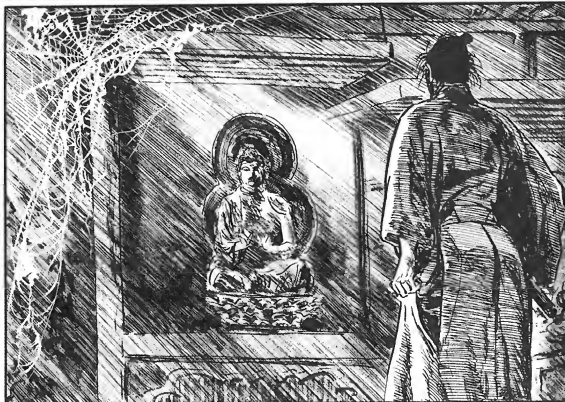








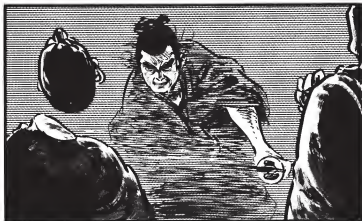
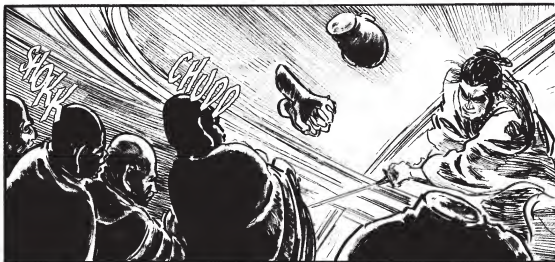












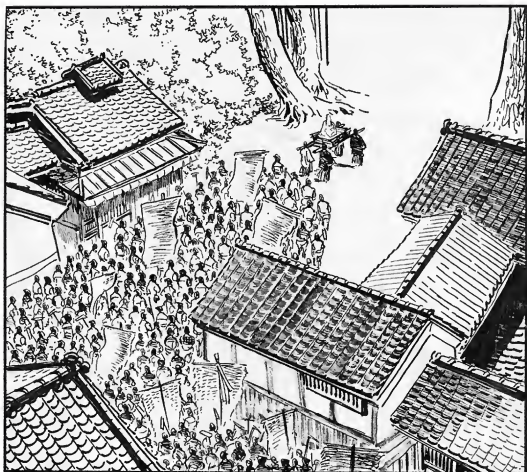


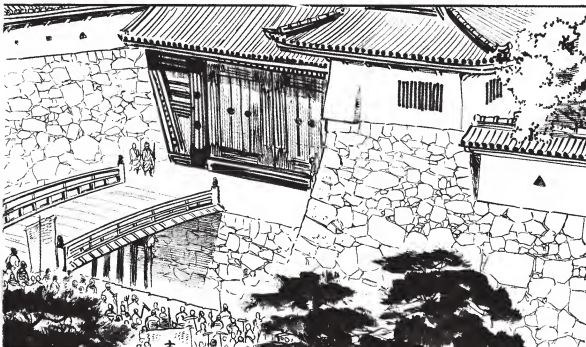
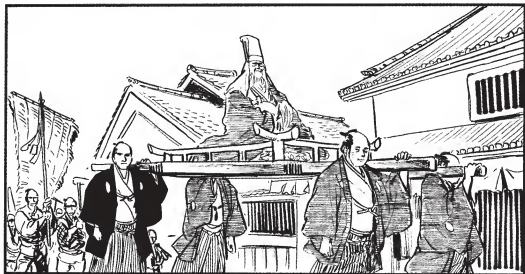


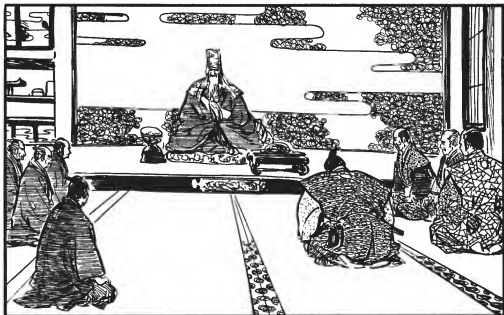


MAY I ASK YOU TO
KILL A LIVING BUDDHA...?
A DIFFICULT FEAT, SOMETHING
FEW IF ANY COULD ACCOMPLISH.
YET PERHAPS YOU, GOOD SIR.
PERHAPS YOU...

I ASK YOU.
NAY, I IMPORE
YOU TO HELP...







NO MATTER HOW OFTEN YOU ASK, **WAJŌ-SAMA**, WE CANNOT LOWER THIS YEAR'S TAX. YET WE ARE PREPARED TO ELIMINATE VARIOUS MISCELLANEOUS LEVIES, FROM TIME TO TIME, FOR THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS. PLEASE, PERSUADE THE PEASANTRY...



CASTLE WARDEN! YOU NEVER LEARN! THE PEASANTS ARE TORTURED BY FAMINE, SO DESPERATE THEY SELL THEIR OWN DAUGHTERS AND KILL THEIR NEWBORN TO SURVIVE! THE PEOPLE ARE THE COUNTRY! REMEMBER AGAIN THAT WITHOUT THE PEASANT, THERE IS NO SAMURAI!

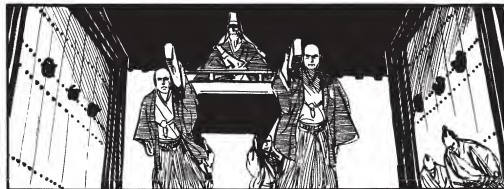


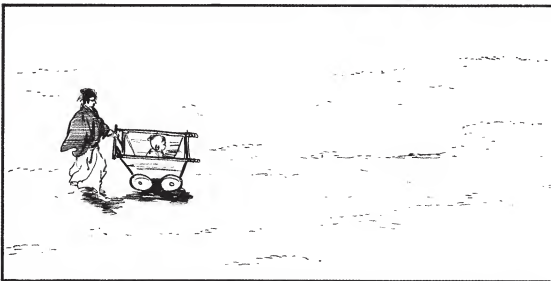
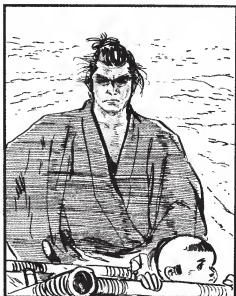
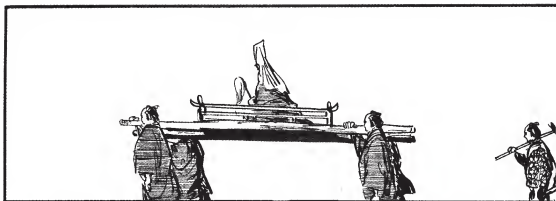
BUT, BUT **WAJŌ-SAMA**! OUR **HAN** IS INFAMOUS FOR ITS POVERTY! WE ARE ALREADY OWE THE RICE MERCHANTS OUR NEXT TWO YEAR'S WORTH OF TAX REVENUES! WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN, EVEN CULTIVATING THE SALT FLATS, TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THESE DESPERATE STRAITS. PLEASE, CONVINCE THEM ONE MORE TIME...

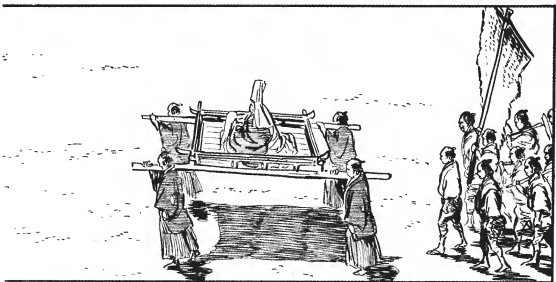


THE PEASANTS WILL UNDERSTAND YOUR EFFORTS! THAT IS WHY THERE HAVE BEEN NO REVOLTS IN THIS **HAN** AS THERE HAVE BEEN IN OTHERS, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THIS GREAT FAMINE. YET NO MAN CAN SIMPLY WAIT PASSIVELY FOR DEATH! YOUR MOST URGENT PRIORITY IS TO SUSPEND THIS YEAR'S TAXES, AND TO SAVE THE PEOPLE OF YOUR **HAN**!

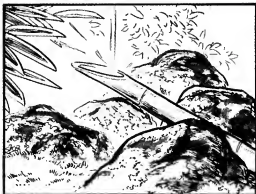






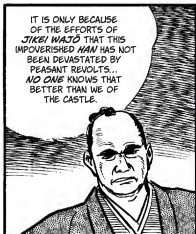


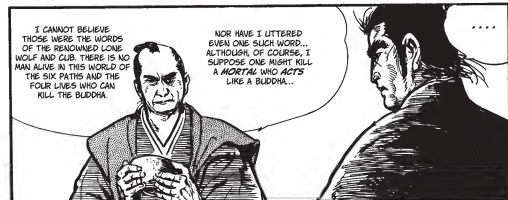
THERE ARE ONLY TWO THINGS
OUT OF BALANCE IN WAKAKI HAN.
ONE IS POVERTY. THE OTHER IS
THE ZEN PRIEST JIKEI, HEAD OF
WAKAKI DAITOKU TEMPLE, A CLERIC
REVERED ACROSS THE LAND...

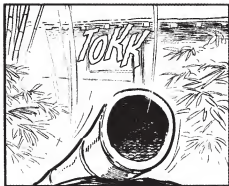
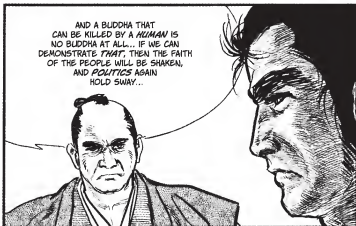


JIKEI WAJŌ IS A MAN
OF THE HIGHEST MORALS
AND DEEPEST COMPASSION,
SO MUCH SO HE IS WORSHIPPED
BY OUR PEOPLE AS A LIVING
BUDDHA. EVEN OUR DAIMYŌ,
LORD HIROTAKA, RESPECTS
HIM WITH ALL HIS HEART.





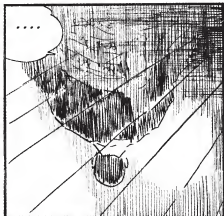
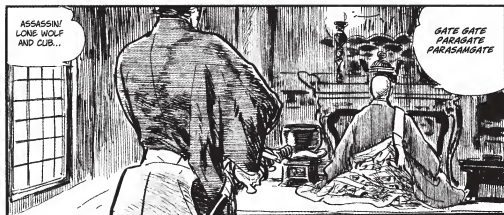


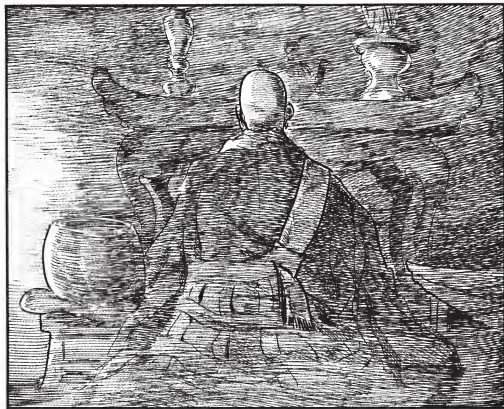


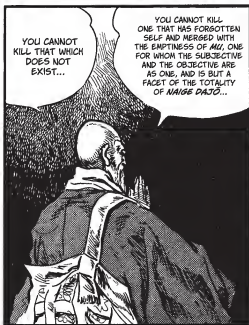
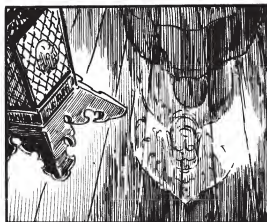


"GATÉ GATÉ
PARAGATÉ
PARASANGATÉ..."



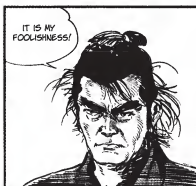


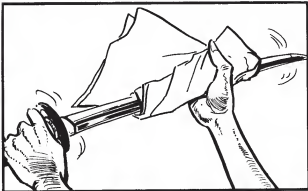




YOU CANNOT
KILL THAT WHICH
DOES NOT
EXIST...

YOU CANNOT KILL
ONE THAT HAS FORGOTTEN
SELF AND MERGED WITH
THE EMPTINESS OF *MU*, ONE
FOR WHOM THE SUBJECTIVE
AND THE OBJECTIVE ARE
AS ONE, AND IS BUT A
FACET OF THE TOTALITY
OF *NAIGÉ DAJÔ*...





ONE WHO LIVES
IN *MEIFUMADO*
CAN CUT OPEN HIS
STOMACH, EVEN
BEFORE BUDDHA
HIMSELF.

IF I CANNOT
ASSASSINATE YOU,
THEN I HAVE NO
RIGHT TO WALK THE
ASSASSIN'S ROAD...
FORGIVE ME!



THEN
ABANDON
THAT
ASSASSIN'S
ROAD!



THAT I
CANNOT DO.
SO LONG AS
I HAVE LIFE, MY
QUEST WILL NOT
PERMIT IT.



IF YOU TRULY
CANNOT ABANDON
THE ASSASSIN'S
ROAD, THEN YOU
MUST PERFECT
MUMON-SEKI,
THE GATELESS
BARRIER.



... *MUMON-SEKI*...?!



INDEED, IS IT NOT
SAID THAT ON THE GREAT
WAY THERE IS NO GATE,
BUT A THOUSAND PATHS
TO CHOOSE FROM? FIND
THE GATE, AND YOU MAY
WALK ALONE BETWEEN
HEAVEN AND EARTH.

....



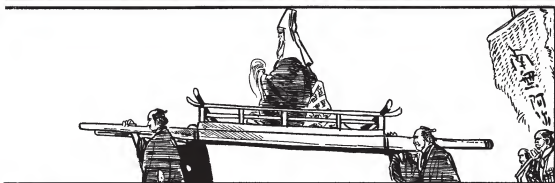
IF YOU CAN KILL
ME, THEN TRULY YOU
WILL HAVE BECOME A
GATELESS BARRIER, THE
MUMON-SERI OF THE
ASSASSIN'S ROAD. IS IT
NOT SAID THAT IF YOU
MEET THE BUDDHA,
KILL THE BUDDHA?

MEET YOUR
PARENTS, KILL
YOUR PARENTS? YET
ALL IS EMPTINESS. MU!!
EMPTINESS! THERE
IS NOTHING BUT
THE ASSASSIN'S
ROAD.



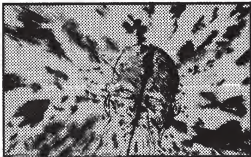
THE
GATELESS
BARRIER OF THE
ASSASSIN'S
ROAD...





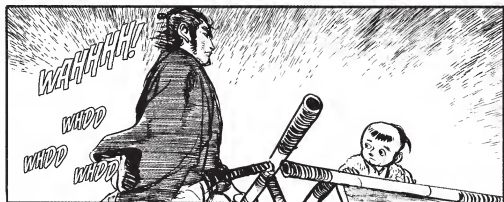


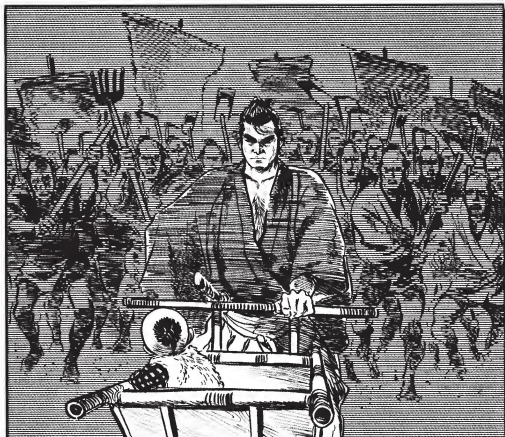




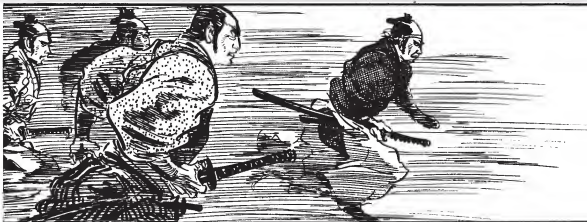


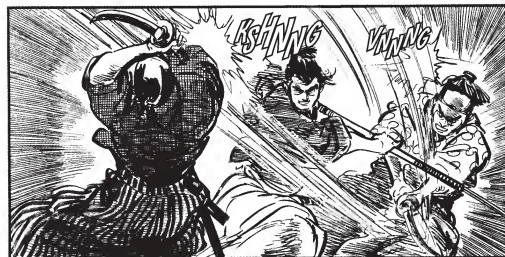




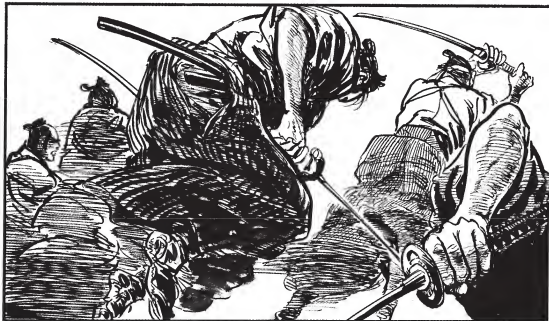






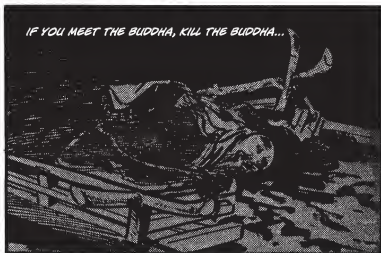














the fourteenth

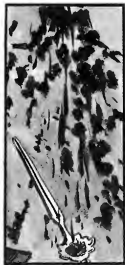


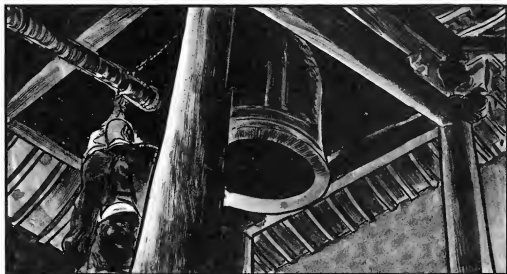
Winter Flower

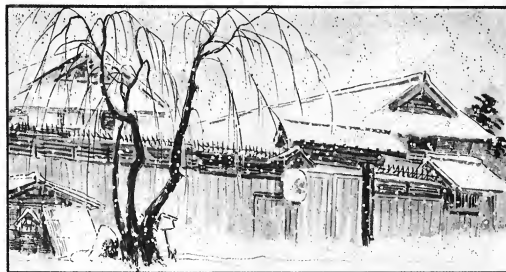
















TYING HER
OWN LESS SO SHE
WOULDN'T WRITHE AND
KICK WHILE SHE DIED.
THAT'S SOMETHING A
SAMURAI WOMAN
WOULD DO.

SHEESH.
I GUESS EVEN
SOME WHORES
HAVE PRIDE.

SINCE
WHEN WOULD
A PROSTITUTE
HAVE A *KAKEN*
DAGGER?



SO.
TELL ME THIS
WOMAN'S *REAL*
NAME. YOU HAVE
HER WORK
AGREEMENT,
DON'T YOU?

ACTUALLY...
ACTUALLY THERE
ISN'T ONE,
OFFICER.

WHY NOT?
SHE WAS
OBVIOUSLY
STILL UNDER
CONTRACT...



N- NO,
OFFICER.
SHE DIDN'T HAVE
A CONTRACT.
FROM THE VERY
BEGINNING.

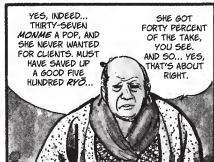
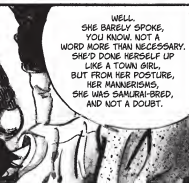
WHAT?!



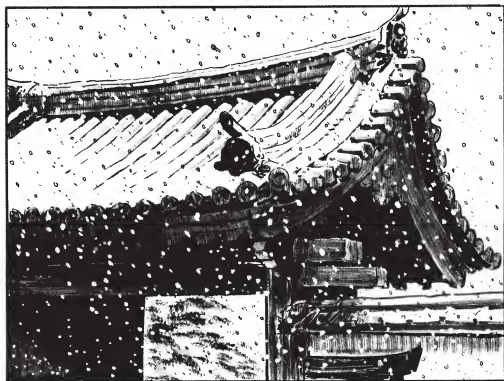
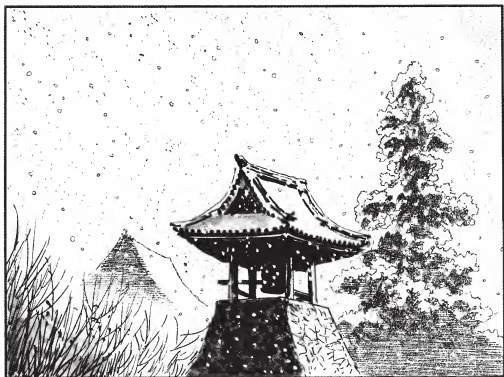
A
PROSTITUTE
WITHOUT A
WORK
AGREEMENT?!

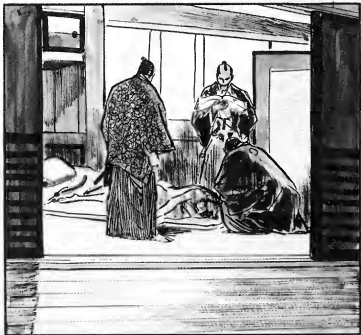
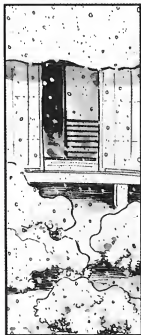
Y- YES, SIR.
THAT'S RIGHT. WE
NEVER GAVE HER AN
ADVANCE TO WORK FOR
US, AND WE DIDN'T BUY
HER FROM A PROCUERER,
EITHER, SIR.

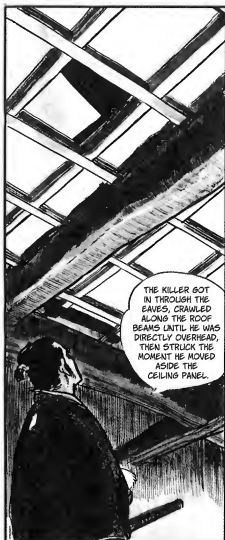
SHE JUST
WALKED RIGHT IN,
AS BOLD AS BRASS.
SAID SHE *WANTED* TO
BE A PROSTITUTE.
THAT SHE DID.











THE KILLER GOT IN THROUGH THE EAVES, CRAWLED ALONG THE ROOF BEAMS UNTIL HE WAS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD, THEN STRUCK THE MOMENT HE MOVED ASIDE THE CEILING PANEL.



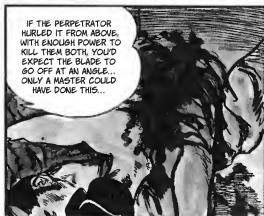
THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE. NOT WHILE THEY WERE MAKING LOVE.

KIKUCHI WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE NOTICED HIM, MUCH LESS DEFLECTED THE BLOW.



INSPECTOR, THIS ISN'T A SPEAR WOUND... YET THE SPLATTER PATTERN SEEMS ODD FOR A SWORD STROKE.

MMM... THIS SLASHING CUT WOULD BE THE TIP OF A CURVED BLADE...



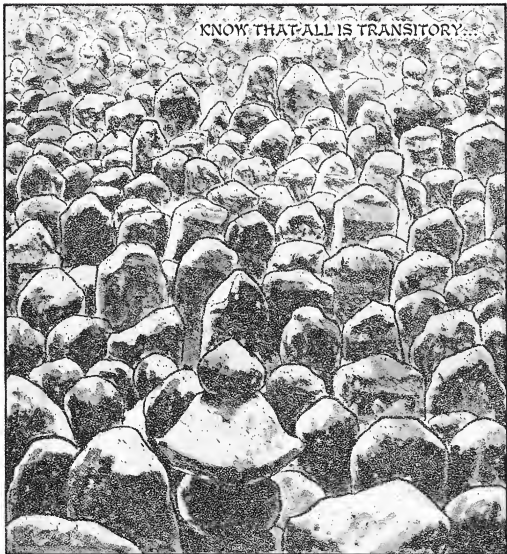
IF THE PERPETRATOR HURLED IT FROM ABOVE, WITH ENOUGH POWER TO KILL THEM BOTH, YOU'D EXPECT THE BLADE TO GO OFF AT AN ANGLE... ONLY A MASTER COULD HAVE DONE THIS...



INCREDIBLE TECHNIQUE. THERE'S NO ONE IN OUR LORD'S SERVICE WHO CAN HANDLE A CURVED BLADE THIS WELL.



KNOW THAT ALL IS TRANSITORY...



* BEGINNING.
MIDDLE, AND END.
THIS WORLD IS BUT
ILLUSION...



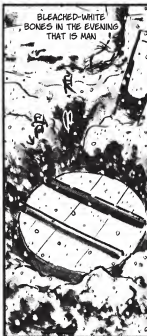


WHAT AWAITS US,
WHAT AWAITS ALL MEN...
NOT KNOWING OUR TODAY'S
NOT KNOWING OUR TOMORROWS
THOSE WE SEND ON BEFORE



AS
EPHEMERAL
AS THE DEW

BORN RED-
FACED BABIES
IN THE MORNING



BLEACHED-WHITE
BONES IN THE EVENING
THAT IS MAN



BLOWN
AWAY LIKE
FLOWER PETALS
ON THE HEART-
LESS WIND...



OUR TWO EYES CLOSE
IN AN INSTANT

IF A SINGLE BREATH
STOPS TOO LONG



A WOMAN
THAT ANYONE
COULD SEE WAS
A SAMURAI'S
DAUGHTER...

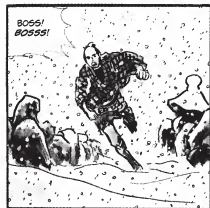
DELIBERATELY SUBJECTING
HERSELF TO A LIFE OF MISERY,
UNTIL FINALLY SHE KILLS
HERSELF AND IS BURIED AT A
PAUPER'S TEMPLE... I DON'T
KNOW WHAT KARMA BROUGHT
HER HERE, BUT I CAN'T LET
HER STORY END LIKE THIS...



IT WAS MY KARMA
THAT BROUGHT ME
TO YOU IN DEATH.
I'LL FIND YOUR
FORTUNE FOR YOU,
SO AT LEAST YOU
CAN REST IN PEACE.

BECAUSE I
KNOW IT WAS
THIS FINAL ROBBERY
THAT MADE YOU
TAKE YOUR LIFE...
NAMU...

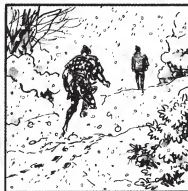
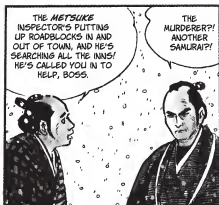
EVEN THE
NEWBORN BABE
MAY PERISH,
UNFULFILLED...



BOSS!
BOSS!



BIG
NEWS!



AND SO?
DID YOU GET
ANYTHING
ON THE
PROSTITUTE?

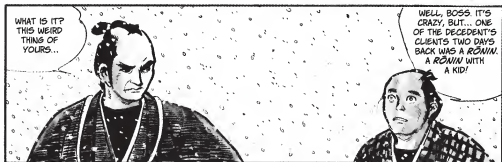
NOTHING, SIR! I GRILLED
EVERYONE FROM THE GIRLS
AT THE BROTHEL TO THE PLACES
SHE LIKED TO SHOP, AND HER
MOST RECENT CLIENTS, TOO.
BUT NOTHING. TOTAL BLANK.

I DID
HEAR ONE
WEIRD THING,
THOUGH.

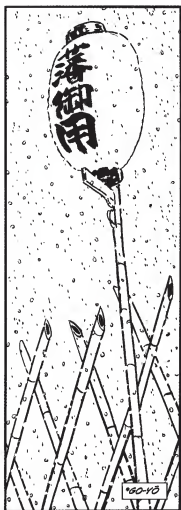


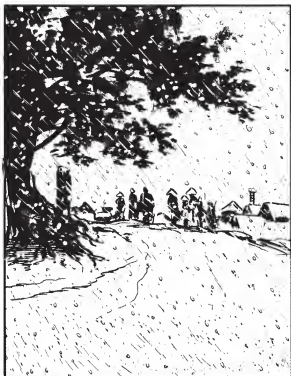
WHAT IS IT?
THIS WEIRD
THING OF
YOURS...

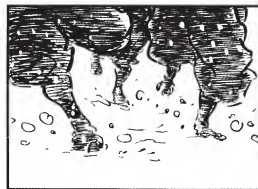
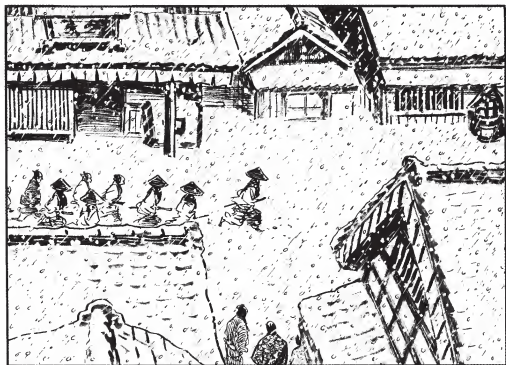
WELL, BOSS. IT'S
CRAZY, BUT... ONE
OF THE DECEDENT'S
CLIENTS TWO DAYS
BACK WAS A **RONIN**.
A **RONIN** WITH
A KID!

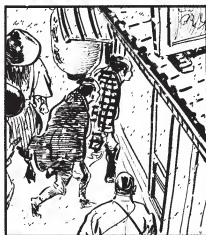






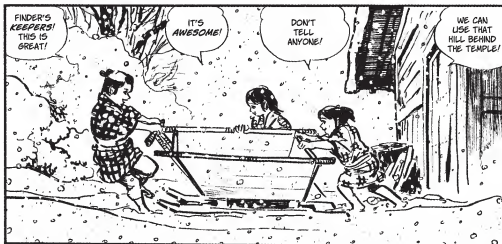
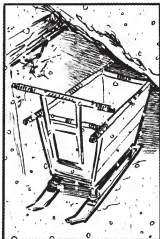


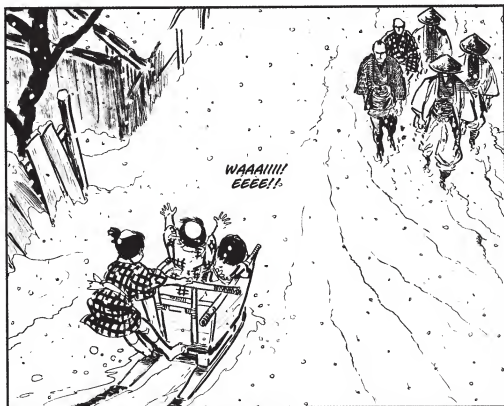
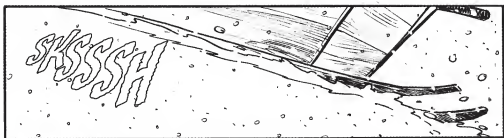


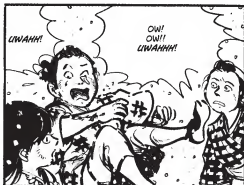
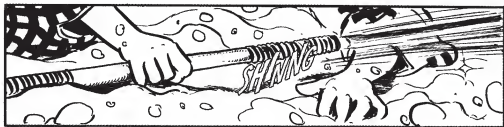
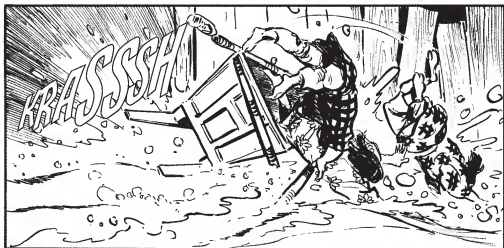






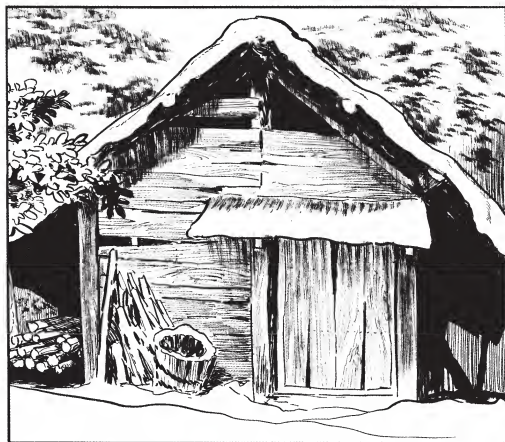


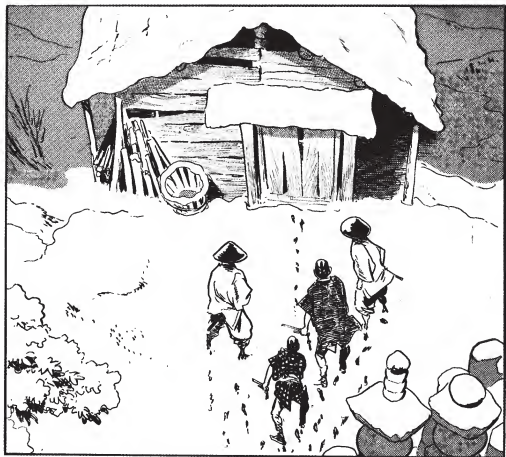




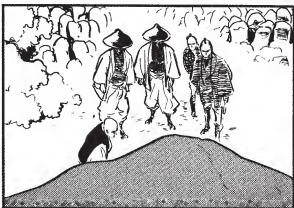




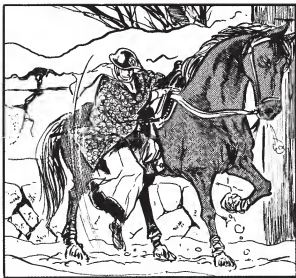


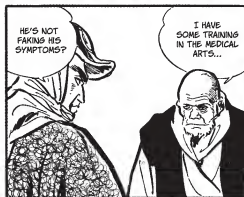


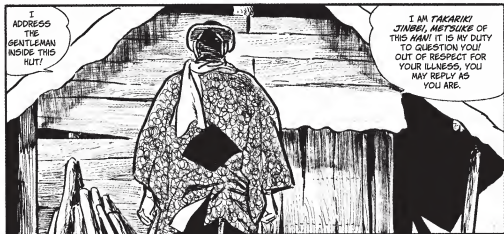


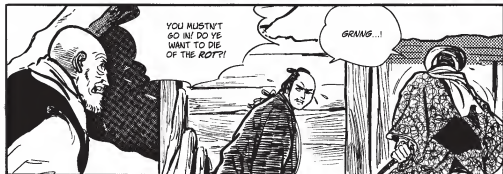
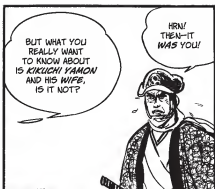
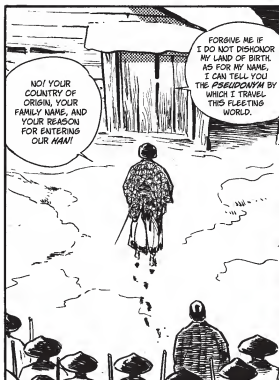


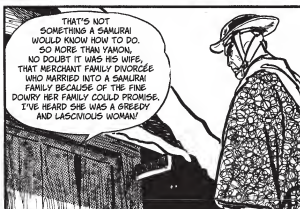
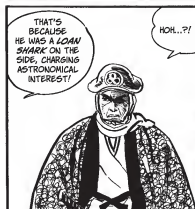
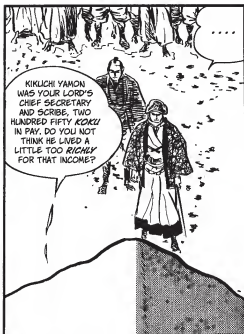


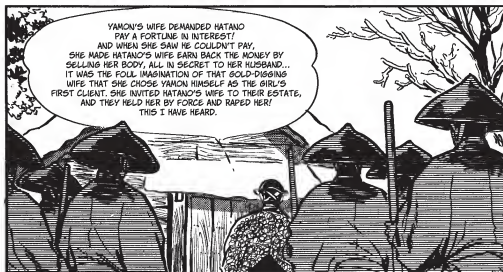
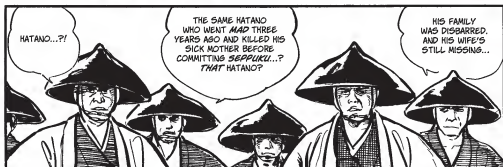


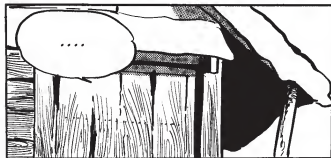
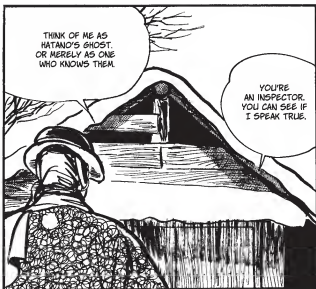


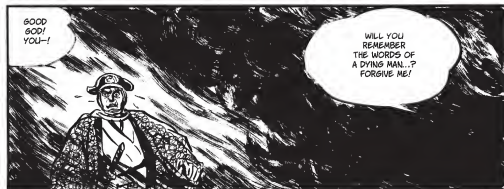
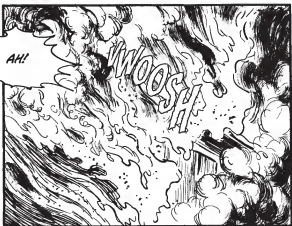










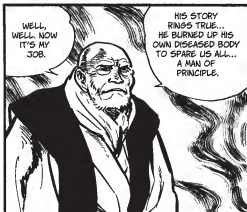


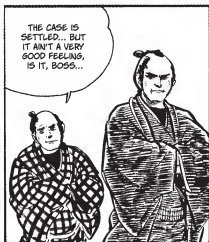
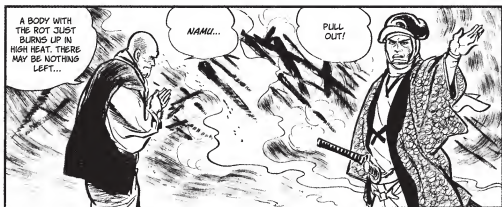
GOOD
GOD!
YOU-!

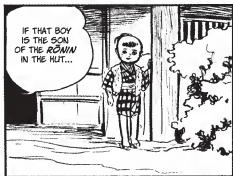
WILL YOU
REMEMBER
THE WORDS OF
A DYING MAN...?
FORGIVE ME!

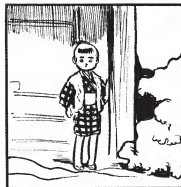
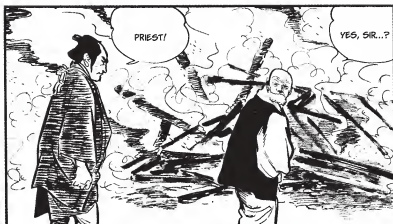














HE SHOULD HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO SHIELD
HIMSELF FROM THE
FLAMES WITH THE
GRAVESTONES
I KEEP IN THERE...

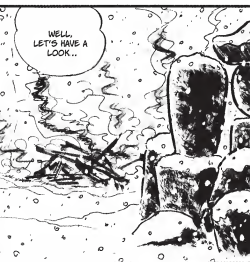


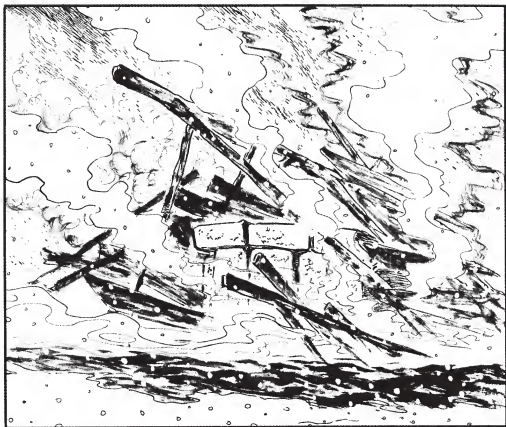
THAT'S WHY
HE TORCHED IT,
I SUPPOSE. BUT...
MAYBE HE REALLY
DID DIE IN THE FIRE.

BUT THEY DIDN'T
FIND ANYTHING
LIKE A BODY
IN THERE...



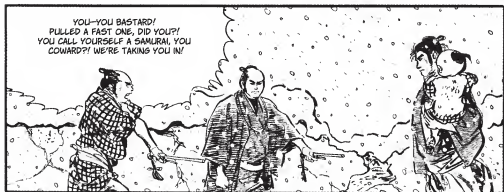
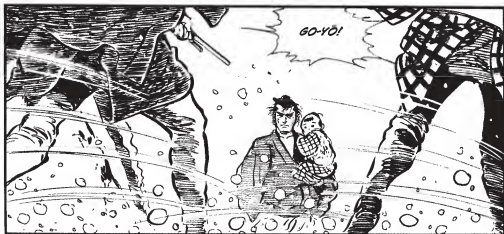
WELL,
LET'S HAVE A
LOOK...

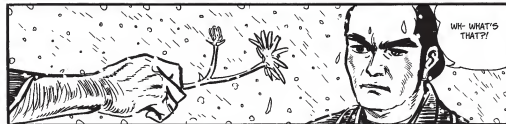
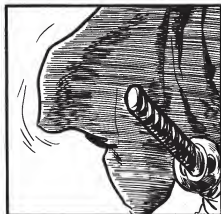








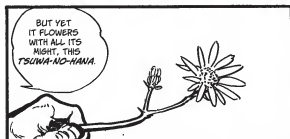




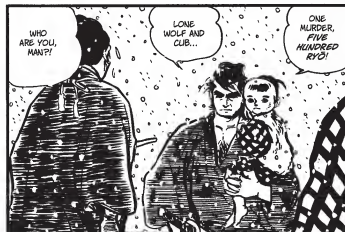


TSUWABUKI?
IS THIS SOME
JOKE?!

THE ONLY FLOWER
TO BLOOM IN THE WINTER
SNOWS... THE WORLD
ALL AROUND IT IS IN
WINTER, FRIGID
AND COLD.



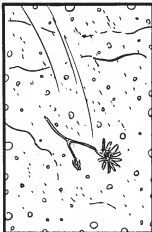
BUT YET
IT FLOWERS
WITH ALL ITS
MIGHT, THIS
TSUWA-NO-HANA.

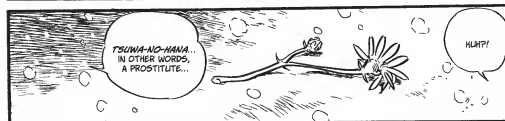
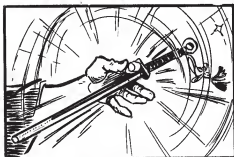
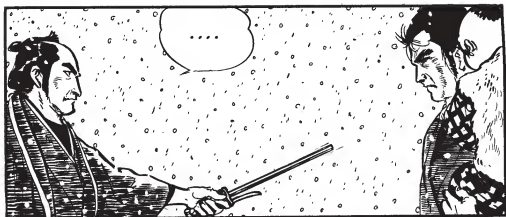


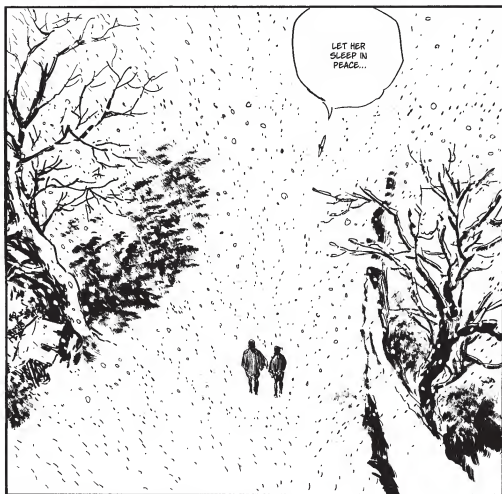
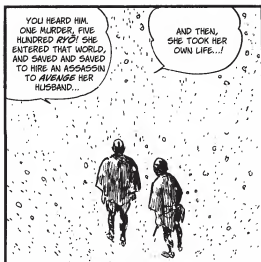
WHO
ARE YOU,
MAN?!

LONE
WOLF AND
CUB...

ONE
MURDER,
FIVE
HUNDRED
RYO!







GLOSSARY

cho

Old unit of measurement. Approximately 109 meters (119 yards).

daimyo

A feudal lord.

dono

A term of respect for a higher-ranking official or aristocrat. A more common term of respect among civilians is *sama*, indicating more respect than the most common *san*.

Edo

The capital of medieval Japan and the seat of the shogunate. The site of modern-day Tokyo.

“Gatē gatē paragatē parasamgatē”

The closing mantra of *Prajnaparamita Hridaya*, *The Heart of Perfect Wisdom Sutra*, one of the central texts of Zen Buddhism. The sutra is in Sanskrit, and is chanted today in Zen temples around the world.

gomen

“Forgive me.”

go-yo

Literally, “official business.” Police and posses carried “go-yo” lanterns when searching for criminals, identifying themselves as law enforcers. A shouted “Go-yo!” could be the Edo equivalent of “Halt! Police!” for a *meisuke*, or “Make way!” for an official procession.

han

A feudal domain.

hanshi

Samurai in the service of a *han*.

kaiken

A dagger kept inside the *kimono* for self-defense. Common among the wives and daughters of samurai.

kaishaku

A second. In the rite of *seppuku*, a samurai was allowed death with honor by cutting his own abdomen. After the incision was complete, the second would perform *kaishaku*, severing the samurai’s head for a quick death. The second was known as a *kaishakunin*.

karo

Elders, usually the senior advisor to a *daimyo*, the lord of a *han*. Since the *daimyo* was required to alternate each year between life in his castle in the *han* and his residence in Edo, the capital and seat of the Tokugawa shogunate, there was usually an *Edo-karo* (Edo elder) and a *kuni-karo* (*han* elder), who would administer affairs in Edo of in the *han* when their lord was away.

ken

Old unit of measure. Approximately five feet.

kimeban

Boards on which prison rules were written.

kogi kaishakunin

The Shogun’s official executioner and *kaishakunin* (see *kaishaku*).

koku

A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han*’s wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

makura-sagashi

Literally, a pillow searcher. A wandering thief who preyed on other travelers, stealing their valuables from under their pillows while they slept.

meido

The afterlife. The land after death. Believed to be a place of darkness. Only a few Buddhist sects described a division between heaven and hell.

meifumado

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

metsuke

Inspector. A post combining the functions of chief of police and chief intelligence officer.

monme

Unit of currency. Worth 1/60th of a ryō gold piece.

mu

Nothingness. A crucial concept in Zen Buddhism, and a goal of all the martial arts. Clearing the mind of all extraneous thoughts and connections, to exist wholly in the moment, freed of all attachment to life and the world around you.

naginata

A two-handed weapon taller than a man, with a long, curved blade. The less-common *nagamaki* was similar, with a shorter shaft and longer blade.

namu

From the Sanskrit "*namas*": "take refuge in the Buddha." A common prayer for the dead.

o-bangashira

The supreme commander of a *han*'s standing guard (or *ban*) of samurai, charged to protect the lord and castle.

Ogami Mountain

Mountain of the great gods. The Chinese characters are different from those used in Itto Ogami's own name, "to pray, to perceive, to see," but have a similar pronunciation. It is also a play on "*okami*," or "wolf."

ri

Old unit of measurement. Approximately 4 kilometers (2.5 miles).

ronin

A masterless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, many impoverished *ronin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryo

A gold piece.

seppuku

The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kaishakunin* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

Takeda shido

Bushido, the way of the warrior. Takeda Shingen was one of the most feared warlords of the Sengoku period of warring states that ended with the ascendancy of the Tokugawa. If he had not been felled by illness, Takeda, not the Tokugawa, might have unified Japan.

Wajo

A term of respect for a high priest or the head of a temple.



Lone Wolf and Cub (*Kozure Okami* in Japan) is acknowledged worldwide for the brilliant writing of series creator Kazuo Koike and the groundbreaking cinematic visuals of the late Goseki Kojima. Creating unforgettable imagery of stark beauty, kinetic fury, and visceral thematic power, the epic samurai adventure has influenced a generation of visual storytellers both in Japan and in the West.

"Lone Wolf and Cub became a multi-million, best-selling graphic novel in Japan because of its unforgettable characters, its nonstop action, its rich detail, and, not in the least, its power to shock the reader."

— Pulp Magazine

■ EISNER AWARD WINNER

■ HARVEY AWARD WINNER

GRAPHIC NOVEL / MANGA



Front cover illustration
by FRANK MILLER
and LYNN VARLEY

子連れ狼